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THE HISTORY OF
CIVILISATION OF THE PEOPLE OF ASSAM
TO THE TWELFTH CENTURY A. D.

Thesis approved for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the University of London

P. C. CHOUDHURY,
M. A. (B. H. U.), PH. D. (LONDON),
Director of Historical and Antiquarian Studies

7319

DEPARTMENT OF
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FOREWORD

To this day the land of Assam contains many races, of widely varying types and at widely differing stages of culture, and the blood of its people is no doubt a mixture of many diverse elements. Its beautiful valleys have long been a meeting place of Indian, Tibeto-Burman and Austric peoples. From about the beginning of the Christian Era, and indeed from a much earlier date if we are to believe tradition, the land of Kāmarūpa, the valley of the Brahmaputra river around Gauhati, was the easternmost out-post of Hindu culture, maintaining a vigorous and independent political and social life, and resisting attacks both from Bengal on the west, and from the wilder non-Aryan tribesmen of the hills to the north, south and east. At least once, under the great king Bhāskaravarman, Kāmarūpa became a decisive factor in the politics of India as a whole.

The sources of our knowledge of this period in the history of Assam are not as plentiful as might be wished. No doubt the court at Prāgjyotiṣa maintained records of important events, but these, like the records of other Indian kingdoms of the time, have vanished, and nothing is left but inscriptions and passing references in literature. Nevertheless enough material remains from this period to trace the main course of the political history of early Assam and to throw some light on the social and religious conditions of the age. In his very thorough study of Assam before the Āhom invasion Dr. P.C. Choudhury has minutely examined all the sources, and has presented his conclusions with much critical acumen. His work is the most detailed and complete study of the subject hitherto published, and will long remain the standard work on early Assam. Moreover its author thoroughly knows and loves his native land, and is very proud of its traditions; one of the most satisfying features of his book is the devoted affection which he displays for his subject, and which will strike an answering chord in the hearts of all his compatriots, and indeed even in the hearts of sympathetic readers who do not know Assam. I am glad that I have been able to help Dr. Choudhury a little in writing this very valuable study of the early history of the land and people of Assam , and am honoured by being permitted to introduce his work to the world.

London, March, 1958. A. L. BASHAM

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PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

The present publication is the outcome of my persistent and laborious work of investigating into the little known past history and culture of Assam, which I started in 1942 as a post-graduate student of History of the Hindu University, Banaras. Being encouraged by my teacher of Ancient Indian History at the University, Dr. R.B. Pandey, I took up Ancient Assam as my special paper, and while working on the subject, I could assess the importance of its study, so far neglected by our Universities and our own people, in the national life of India as a whole.

I really felt the need of a constructive work on Assam, particularly of the early period, when I had to teach History of Assam to the post-graduate students in History of the University of Gauhati in 1949. I began collecting more materials, and with the back-ground thus prepared, I started for London in 1951, to join the School of Oriental and African Studies for doing further research on the subject of the History of Civilisation of the people of Assam from the earliest times to roughly about the end of the twelfth century A.D. I was fortunate, however, to be able to collect more materials in London, Oxford and Cambridge than it was possible for me to do in Assam. I completed my period of research in 1953, and was awarded the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy by the University of London on the said subject. Though the publication is the same as the thesis, submitted to the University for the Degree, care has been taken to add new information or to omit old ones in the light of up-to-date researches.

I have tried my best to critically examine every topic on the basis of genuine evidence to give as far as possible a true picture of the land and her people. The varied problems, which a work like this involves, have presented me with many difficulties, but I shall deem my labour well paid if I have been able to show that this little known State had a long and continuous history of her own and immensely contributed to the variegated texture of Indian civilisation.

By way of acknowledgment, I have to mention a few published books on the subject. The pioneer work on the early period is *Early History of Kāmarūpa* by the late K.L. Barua, and though the book is not based on adequate research on modern lines, his contribution is by no means small. Dr. B.K. Barua's A *Cultural History of Assam* I, is no doubt a research work, containing useful information on varied topics, he has dealt with, but it appears that the author has not examined and utilised all the avai-

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lable sources to trace the origin and nature of civilisation of the land. Pandit Padmanath Bhattacharya's *Kāmarūpa Śāsanāvalī* where in he has edited and published the royal *śāsanas* of ancient Assam, is really a notable contribution. I have utilised with profit the information gathered from the Monographs on Assam tribes and articles bearing on their culture, contributed by writers like Dr. J. H. Hutton, Mr. J. P. Mills, Professor C.V.F. Haimendorf, Mr. T.C. Hodson, Mr P.R.T. Gurdon and others, both Indian and European. Useful informations have also been drawn from a few research articles, published in journals and periodicals. There are a few other works of secondary importance; but none of these gives a fairly good and true picture of past Assam. I take this opportunity of expressing my gratitude to all the contributors to the history and culture of Assam, and crave the pardon of those whom I have not properly addressed in my references either in the text or in the foot-notes.

I have a pleasant duty to acknowledge with thanks the valuable instructions and advice which Professor C.H. Philips, Mr. J.P. Mills and Dr. H.C. Ray were kind enough to give me while I was working as a research student at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. I am extremely grateful to Dr. A.L. Basham, now Professor of South Asian History at the Institute, under whose supervision and personal care I had the opportunity to work on the subject, for the invaluable advice and suggestions he gave me so ungrudgingly in writing out the thesis. He has laid me under special obligation for kindly writing a short "foreword" to the book.

I am grateful indeed to Dr. S.K. Bhuyan, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Gauhati for kindly moving Government as early as 1953-54 for the publication of the book and to the Government of Assam for placing the requisite sum of money at the disposal of this Department, but for which the book would not have seen the light of day. Thanks are also due to Śri Hemrath Barman and other members of the staff for their assistance in bringing out the book, and to Sri G. Srinivasachari, Proprietor of the G.S. Press, Madras for kindly printing the work with utmost care and as speedily as possible.

At the end, I owe an apology to the readers in general for any error that may have crept into the volume, and only expect that the students of the history of civilisations, for whom the book is primarily intended, will find it informative and receive incentive to do further research on other allied topics.

Gauhati, Assam,
November, 1958.

PRATAP CHANDRA CHOUDHURY

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PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

Since the publication of the book in 1959 a few important source materials, notable among which are a large number of bronze images along with copper bells, the biggest one bearing inscription in mixed *Brāhmī* and *Devanāgarī*, and a few other articles of great antiquity and archaeological importance, discovered from the Narakāsur Hill; and one Gāchtal Copper Plate inscription of the king Gopāla of the Pāla family, recovered very recently through the courtesy of Sri R.V. Lyngdoh, the District Magistrate of Nowgong. Such source materials and finds are being brought to our notice. Equally valuable are the Buddhist remains at Kāmākhyā and Hājo. In bringing out this revised second edition, therefore, all these source materials have been examined and new information added accordingly. The said Buddhist remains have led us to arrive at a conclusion that not only Kāmākhyā and Hājo but also many other places of Assam were important centres of the Buddhist faith, beginning at least with the period of *Mahāyāna*. It may be admitted, however, that in dealing with an almost unwritten period of Assam's history, scope for revised opinion or different conclusion still remains.

The historians of India, who, while rewriting the volumes on the people and culture of India, published by the *Bhāratīya Vidyā Bhavan*, Bombay, do not appear to have given due recognition to the contribution made by the rulers and the ruled to the political and cultural life of India, may be given to rethinking whether or not Kāmarūpa did add one hitherto unkown strong element to the historic tripartite struggle that was waged for centuries for supremacy in northern India between the *Rāṣṭrakūṭas*, the *Gurjara Pratihāras* of Kanauj and the *Pālas* of Gauḍa; for, if it was not for political rivalry and diplomacy, why did Indrapāla then marry, as known from the Gāchtal inscription of Gopāla, Rājyadevī, a princess of the *Rāṣṭrakūṭa* family ? There are many strings in the life history of the people of this part of India, long forgotten though, to be reckoned with. Be that as it may, the burden of my revised work is to affirm that *Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa* was a factor of importance in the wide range of political and cultural life of India since time immemorial, and, therefore, the indologists would be doing justice to the history of the people of this ancient land if they recognise this basic fact.

It is a happy augury that the teaching of Assam's history has been provided in the syllabus of the Higher Secondary Schools of the State,

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and at long last the University of Gauhati has introduced one full compulsory but alternative paper on Assam history in M.A. Classes, and one paper in history Honours course. But, what I strongly feel is, the University should introduce at least two compulsory papers in political history of Assam and a group of three papers on cultural history in M.A. Classes as immediately as possible. In fine, adequate provisions shall have to be made for the teaching of Assam's history right from schools to the University stages. This measure will accelerate the process of historical research in Assam in which we are greatly lacking. A new trend in historical studies, centering round particularly the origin, antiquity and location of Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa and Kāmākhyā has been noticed. This is no doubt a good sign; but, in evaluating the source materials and in rewriting history we must be very careful, lest we make a caricature of well-established facts.

As regards printing, care has been taken to see that no errors creep into this edition, but it is quite possible that a few printing mistakes have been committed and, I, therefore, crave the pardon of scholars and the readers in general for any act of omission and commission.

I am grateful indeed to our Education Department of the Government of Assam for placing requisite funds at our disposal for bringing out this edition of the book. My thanks are also due to all the staff members of the D.H.A.S., particularly to Sri B.B. Hazarika and Sri Hemrath Barman for assisting me in seeing the book through the Press; and lastly to the proprietor, Lakshmi Printing Press, particularly to Sri P.C. Bordoloi for taking personal interest in getting the volume printed at the press in time.

Gauhati : Assam, P.C. CHOUDHURY
March, 1966

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ABBREVIATIONS

A.B.O.R.I.	..	Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute
A.R.A.S.I.	..	Annual Report of the Archaeological Survey of India
A.S.B.	..	Archaeological Survey of Burma
A.Res.	..	Asiatic Researches
A.C.R.	..	Assam Census Report
A.Rev.	..	Assam Review
B.S.P.P.	..	Baṅgīa Sāhitya Pariṣad Patrikā
B.C.R.	..	Bengal Census Report
B.S.O.S.	..	Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies, London
C.R.	..	Calcutta Review
C.I.I.	..	Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum
D.H.A.S.	..	Department of Historical & Antiquarian Studies, Gauhati
D.H.N.I.	..	Dynastic History of Northern India
E.H.I.	..	Early History of India
E.H.K.	..	Early History of Kāmarūpa
E.R.E.	..	Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics
E.I.	..	Epigraphia Indica
F.L.	..	Folk Lore
G.J.	..	Geographical Journal, London
H.C.	..	Harṣacarita
H.M.H.I.	..	History of Medieval Hindu India
H.N.E.I.	..	History of North-Eastern India
I.A.	..	Indian Antiquary
I.C.	..	Indian Culture
I.H.Q.	..	Indian Historical Quarterly
J.A.H.S.	..	Journal of the Andhra Historical Society
J.A.O.S.	..	Journal of the American Oriental Society
J.A.S.B.	..	Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal
J.A.R.S.	..	Journal of the Assam Research Society, Gauhati
J.B.O.R.S.	..	Journal of the Bihar & Orissa Research Society
J.D.L.	..	Journal of the Department of Letters, Calcutta
J.G.O.S.	..	Journal of the German Oriental Society
J.I.H.	..	Journal of Indian History
J.I.S.O.A.	..	Journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Art, Calcutta
J.O.R.	..	Journal of Oriental Research
J.P.I.O.Conf.	..	Journal & Pros. of the All India Oriental Conference
J.R.A.I.	..	Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute, London.
J.R.A.S.	..	Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, London
J.R.A.S.B.	..	Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal
J.R.G.S.	..	Journal of the Royal Geographical Society, London
J.R.S.A.	..	Journal of the Royal Society of Art, London
J.S.A.	..	Journal of the Society of Art
J.S.O.A.	..	Journal of the Society of Oriental Art, Calcutta
J.U.P.H.S.	..	Journal of the U.P. Historical Society
K.P.	..	Kālikā Purāṇa
K.S.	..	Kāmarūpa Śāsanāvalī
L.S.I.	..	Linguistic Survey of India
M.A.S.I.	..	Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India
M.A.S.B.	..	Memoirs of the Asiatic Society of Bengal
M.G.S.I.	..	Memoirs of the Geological Survey of India
M.R.	..	Modern Review
N.I.A.	..	New Indian Antiquary
P.H.A.I.	..	Political History of Ancient India
P.A.S.B.	..	Proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal
R.S.P.P.	..	Rangpur Sāhitya Pariṣad Patrikā
R.G.S.I.	..	Records of the Geological Survey of India
S.B.E.	..	Sacred Book of the East
Y.T.	..	Yoginī Tantra

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1. Scope of the Work—nature of treatment :

The ancient history of Assam, or *Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa*, the names by which the land was known from the dawn of its history, is an almost unexplored and uninvestigated field of study. The scope of our work covers both its political and cultural aspects. Not to speak of the unwritten period of prehistoric culture, even for the historical one, no proper spade-work has so far been done. Our aim, therefore, is to find out new facts and reconstruct the early history of Assam, based on a genuine, reasonable interpretation.

It is true that our knowledge of the past is only partial and this is not only because of the paucity of materials and their conflicting nature, but is also due to the weakness of the human mind in giving proper interpretation to the known facts. Moreover, all events in history cannot be explained with reference to cause and effect, apparent or real.[1] The periodisation in history is another defect, that stands in the way. History is but an eternal process and the so-called distinction between prehistory and history is not very wide. In fact, a large part of contemporary history, being unwritten, passes either into prehistory and the blank of oblivion or "into the vast body of the subject-matter of archaeological science".[2] History, therefore, must be viewed as covering the entire record of the people; because artificial man-made divisions of history obscure the fundamental unity of human civilisation. The past is never past, present is never present and even the so-called distinction between contemporary events and past history breaks down in the face of the inability of the human mind to hold the fleeting moment.[3] That which one calls the present, is already past and can only be reclaimed through the traces it has left.[4] It is aptly remarked that "the present is the fruit of the past and the germ of the future".[5] Viewed from this standpoint, the ancient history of the civilisation of Assam is to be studied as only a chapter in the evolution of the cultural life of the people. Moreover, our efforts

1. John Buchan, *The Causal and Casual in History*, p. 17.
2. Holmes, *Handbook of American Archaeology*, Pt. I, p. 3.
3. B. Croce, *History: Its Theory and Practice*, Chap. I.
4. A. Johnson, *The Historian and Historical Tradition*, p. 22.
5. See B. A. Hinsdale, *How to Study and Teach History*. p. 5.

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at tracing the origin of this culture in its most part is based on an interpretation of prehistoric survivals. In this task we cannot avoid making inferences and hypotheses for a period of which materials are few, and therefore, no statement relating to the past may be held to be final.[6]

2. Importance and aim of the study of Assam's past history :

The ancient history of Assam is the history of an ancient civilisation evolved through centuries, in some measure different from those of other States of India; its differences were mostly due to the complex nature of Assam's political and cultural conditions. But, though Assam is, as it were, an anthropological museum with varied socio-religious systems, the continuous process of the different stages of her history has been closely linked up with India on the one side, as on the other with South-east Asia and the Pacific world. Assamese culture or cultures are but the sum-total of the primitive and the advanced, contributed both by Aryan and non-Aryan elements. The history of India as a whole would remain incomplete without a thorough understanding of the origin and development of the civilisation of this State. Beginning with the prehistoric period, the land has been exposed to invasions from all directions; but with the dawn of history her links became closer, both politically and culturally with the rest of India. In fact, the ancient history of Assam really unfolded itself with the coming of the Aryans, beginning with the period of the *Brāhmaṇas* and the *Epics*. Except for stray references to the colonisation of South-east Asia from Assam, it is yet to be proved that Prāgjyotiṣa had effective political relations with Burma and other regions in South-east Asia at an early period; cultural links with these regions, however, cannot be doubted. But no attempt has so far been made to show the real connection between Assam and the rest of India on the one hand and with South-east Asia on the other. Existing sources indicate that her culture was a composite one, contributed by Austric, Alpine-Aryan and the Tibeto-Burman elements; but the study of these elements appears so far to have remained incomplete. We shall try to show that the pre-Aryans of Assam, like the Aryans, made a significant contribution to a fairly advanced civilisation. As S. K. Bhūyān remarks : "There was as its foundation a culture which permeated the life of the people and which raised the average man to a superior level, endowed with a consciousness of patriotism which would never desert him even under the severest temptation. But the glories of Kāmarūpa remain buried, because no vigorous investigations have

6. J. Winson, '*Perils of Historical Narrative*,' Atlantic Monthly, Vol. 66 (1890)

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been launched here to discover the treasures and reveal them to the rest of India which may as well be proud of the same."[7] Our objective in this work has been to trace the missing links and show the nature of the ancient culture of Assam which had its due share in contributing to India's civilisation.

3. Topics discussed :

(a) *Value of sources :* We have examined the sources in the next chapter to show that archaeology is invaluable for the study of races and socio-religious aspects of the history of the period. Epigraphy is of great help for both the political and cultural history. Literary sources supplement our findings. The Assamese chronicles and other historical works are no doubt trustworthy to a certain extent; but the fundamental defect from which Indian literature in general suffers, is the absence of chronological treatment. It is true that time and place are the essentials of history. It is with reference to this defective chronology that Fleet remarks thus : "The Hindus have not transmitted to us any historical work which can be accepted as reliable.—It is indeed very questionable whether the ancient Hindus ever possessed the true historical sense in the shape of the faculty of putting together genuine history on broad and critical lines."[8] But it may as well be held that chronology is not the sole test of a historical work; moreover, the critical treatment of historical data is a modern development. It is unfair that the entire mass of the literary works of the ancient Indians be criticised by modern standards, or compared with those of Herodotus, Thucydides or Tacitus. Even these classical writers suffer from the same chronological and other defects. As J. B. Bury points out, the key-note of the accounts of Herodotus is his contrast of the Hellenestic with the Oriental culture. Herodotus himself writes of an account : "I do not disbelieve, nor do I absolutely believe it."[9] There is no reason to doubt that some of the ancient Indian works may be used as materials for history and "with all their admitted defects—occupy an important place in the evolution of Indian historiography."[10] Moreover, to discover the truth lying in the mines of literary products and to give a true interpretation to both records and remains, divested of self interested subjective criticism, constitute in general a fine historical art.[11] S.K. Bhūyān, disputing Fleet's statement, remarks that

7. *I.H.Q.*, V., pp. 457 f.

8. *The Imperial Gazetteer of India*, II, pp. 3-5; also, Macdonell, *Sanskrit Literature*, p. 10. ; Keith, *J.R.A.S.*, 1914, pp. 739, 1031 (note); *Ibid*, 1915, p. 143 (note).

9. J. B. Bury, *The Ancient Greek Historians*, pp. 42-44.

10. U. N. Ghoshal. *The Beginnings of Indian Historiography and other essays*, p. 51.

11. P. C. Choudhury, *On the Historiography in Ancient India with Particular Reference to Assam, Cottonian*, Gauhati, 1949. pp. 96-98.

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this "would have been qualified to a great extent if it had been known that the Assamese people have preserved regular chronicles of their country from very early times."[12] Grierson rightly points out that the Assamese "are justly proud of their national literature. In no department have they been more successful than in a branch of study in which India is as a rule curiously deficient. Remnants of historical works that treat of the time of Bhagadatta—are still in existence. — According to the customs of the country a knowledge of the *Burañjīs* was an indispensable qualification to an Assamese gentleman; and every family of distinction as well as the government and public officers, kept the most minute records of contemporary events."[13] We cannot entirely agree with Gait's remark that : "The science of history was unknown to the early inhabitants of Assam and it is not till the Āhom invasion in 1228 A.D. that we obtain anything at all approaching a connected account of the people and their rulers."[14]

(b) *The land and her people :* Whatever the nature of the sources, an understanding of the geography of the land, which had an important bearing on the civilisation of the people, is essential. The land was known not only to the Buddhist world but also to the writers of the *Epics*, *Purāṇas* and other ancient works and in no small measure to the Classical writers. Much depends on the identification of the names of people and places, mentioned in these works. A description of her geography with reference to the ancient period will show the fullness of its variety, which had an immense effect in contributing to the growth of diverse cultures. The natural divisions of the land, drawn by Nature herself, kept the hill tribes secluded and isolated from one another; but the nature of her geography had an important effect upon their outward form and inward character. The communications between the hills and the plains were not very difficult and, therefore, in the midst of bewildering deversities, there was at times an unity of purpose which led both the hillmen and the dwellers of the plains to fight together against their common enemy. This perhaps will explain the fact that no imperial invader could conquer the land until the end of our period.

The study of the racial elements is another interesting and difficult problem in the history of this land, which has not been systematically made by any writer. Prehistoric archaeology and other evidence prove that the land, lying in one of the migration routes of mankind, received wave after wave of immigrants and perhaps sent out emigrants from prehistoric

12. *I.H.Q.*, V, p. 457.
13. *L.S.I.*, V, I, p. 396.
14. *History of Assam*, p. 1.

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times onwards. Negrito, Austric, Indonesian, Alpine-Aryan, Tibeto-Burman and other elements equally contributed to her population. But no scientific anthropometric measurements have yet been made to identify a particular element in the general population. We shall, however, show that some of the earlier strains were developed here, though the fact remains that the land received elements from the west as from the greater part of South-east Asia. This seems to be confirmed by their ethnography and other allied factors. We must admit that after hundreds of years of admixture, anything like finding out a pure original element for study will be an impossibility. It is for the first time that we are attempting at a comprehensive description of all the races that contributed to the Assamese culture; that culture, formed by the currents and cross-currents of centuries of inundating migrants that swept over the hills and plains of the Brahmaputra was not fundamentally uniform. But that the various elements lived in harmony since a very early period, seems to be attested by the available sources.[15]

(c) *Nature of political history :* The political history of the land began long before the foundation of the Varman line during the 4th Century A.D. The crude organisations of the primitive people did not perhaps centre round the central kingdom of Prāgjyotiṣa. The kingdom, as we find, was not ruled by the aboriginal or Mongolian chiefs. The first foundation of political rule can reasonably be attributed to the Alpines, who, we believe, were the traditional rulers, so significantly mentioned in literature. The traditional dynasty was long continued by different families, until the end of the Pāla line, and in spite of a few gaps, it seems that the same dynasty of Naraka-Bhagadatta ruled from Prāgjyotiṣa throughout our period. We have, no doubt, evidence of a few smaller principalities ruled by chiefs or feudatories of the central kingdom. Such a state of affairs continued till the time of the foundation of small kingdoms by the Kachāris, Manipuris, Jaintīās, Chutīās, Koches and the Āhoms in the beginning of the 13th Century A.D. The political machinery and the ideals on which it was based, worked for the peace and prosperity of all. Both politically and culturally, the rulers held diplomatic relations with the contemporary powers of India, and the kingdom was not disturbed by civil wars and revolutions, nor was it occupied by any foreign power, until the beginning of the 13th Century A.D.; in that respect the political history of Assam is very significant.

15. Sir Andrew Clow writes: 'Nowhere else in India has there been such a mixture of races as in the Assam valley and nowhere have the peoples lived in more harmony'.—(Quoted by A. Ali and E. Lambert, *Assam*, pp. 14 f.).

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(d) *Origin and evolution of culture in different fields:* Society, economic conditions, education and literature, religion, and art and architecture, the constituents of Assam's culture, show that, that culture was a complex one. It is not possible to go into the origin of the tribal social organisations at the present state of our knowledge; nor is it possible to show the relations of the tribal organisations in the past with the Hindu organisation of the plains. Our treatment of the subject will, therefore, be restricted to the latter system. It is quite likely that certain distinctions remained between the two. The *varṇāśrama dharma* of Hindu life did not materially affect the tribal system. But there is no basic difference between the totemism, taboos, laws of exogamy, etc., that were evolved by the primitive elements, and the class distinctions of the Hindus. In fact, the origin of the social system of the Hindus may be attributed to the same causes that were responsible for the development of the social laws and marriage rules of the tribal non-Aryan life. The whole structure of the socio-economic life of the non-Aryans was based more or less upon the same practices as were followed in an advanced Hindu society, and the non-Aryans as well as the pre-Aryans in general greatly affected the whole Assamese social structure.

In the domain of economic life and industrial arts, the various elements equally contributed to their growth. Assam was for centuries a famous centre of the production of silk. Commercial relations by both land and sea were carried on from early times, and important routes from India to Burma and China lay through Assam. The economic wealth of the land greatly enhanced its prosperity, and, as we shall show, the non-Aryans had a great part to play in the material progress of the State.

In education and literature, the existing evidence does not indicate that the non-Aryans appreciably contributed towards their development. Their unwritten dialects, varied and unintelligible to each other, remained as such in our period. With the foundation of the political dynasty, Kāmarūpa became, under the patronage of rulers, a great centre of education. The voluminous literature of the period, foreign accounts like those of Yuan Chwang, and the epigraphs testify to the gradual development of Assamese literature and education. The language, as we shall show, developed along its own independent lines, contaning more non-Aryan words than those of pure Sanskrit, unlike Bengali and other allied languages. This, along with many survivals of Austric and Tibeto-Burman elements in the place and river names of Assam, indicates the composite character of the Assamese civilisation.

For the study of the religious life of the people, we must consider the origin and development of almost all the faiths that existed in contem-

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porary India. The origin of some of the advanced ideas of the Hindus may be explained on the basis of the crude faiths of the non-Aryans, such as the cults of the phallus and of fertility, fetishism, animism and the like. In fact, the origin of Tāntrikism in Assam, which had a great hold in the land, can be traced back to such cults. Assam remained throughout our period a fertile field for the evolution of all the primitive ideas of magic and sorcery, along with the advanced notions about god or gods and humanity in general. Let us note in this connection that we are at times almost as primitive in our ideas and daily life as the so-called primitives themselves. In fine, the foundation of the various faiths in ancient Assam was laid to a certain extent by the non-Aryans; this we shall try to substantiate with the help of the existing materials.

In the domain of fine arts, the scattered remains, as we shall show, point to the fact that the ancient Assamese artists worked in line with the traditional Indian system, but unlike those of other parts of India, were greatly influenced by the non-Aryan art. In discussing the subject, we shall try to show the characteristics that were peculiar to this land and the similarities with contemporary schools of India.

4. Assam's culture—an integral part of Indian culture :

On an examination of the political and cultural history of this ancient land we have disputed the contention of those writers who assert that "Assam is a country, which at most periods of its history has remained outside the Indian civilisation".[16] Assam in fact, had a significant history of her own and had intimate connection with both India and with a wider world beyond—that the special Assamese characteristics resulted from the absorption of varied elements and conditions of life, travelling to this land at different periods of its history and that Assam's culture constitutes a strong and vitalising force in Indian life.

16. *Cambridge History of India,* 1, pp 11-12.

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CHAPTER II

SOURCES

1. Dearth of materials :

Historical materials on which a reliable frame-work of the history of early Assam can be built, are as megre as confused. For the prehistoric period, we must depend entirely on neoliths and megaliths, and only a few of the latter can be ascribed to the ancient period. Even for the historical period, we have only a few local epigraphs and scattered literary documents, historical or otherwise. The legendary accounts, with which we begin the political history of the land, are as varied and conflicting as doubtful in their authenticity. Much will depend on the tracing of a connection between the legendary proto-historical period and the historical one. The genealogy given in the epigraphs, as far as it goes, is, however, unchallenged. We have to face similar difficulties in dealing with the cultural history.

The history of this ancient land, in the proper sense of the term, before the rise of the Varmans during the fourth century A.D., is still obscure, and no writer has so far attempted to write even a brief outline of the period prior to the foundation of that line. We shall show that the history of civilisation of Assam began long before the fourth century A.D. in both its political and cultural aspects. The period has, however, been obscured by the confused interpretations of the existing materials given by different writers. Hence, we shall try not only to find new information but also to evaluate that already existing, and make an attempt at the reconstruction of the history of the land on a reasonable foundation.

The sources may broadly be classified under the following head : Literary, Foreign accounts and Archaeological evidence.

2. Literary sources :

(a) *Early and later Brāhmaṇical works:* Both the early *Vedic* and later *Vedic* literature are important for the study of the cultural relations between the Aryans and the non-Aryans, inhabiting different parts of India, since their period of settlement and migrations. The cultural life that they depict, throws important light on the evolution of the Hinduism of later times—a mixture of Aryan and non-Aryan elements. The gradual

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advance of the Aryans to Eastern India is described in these works. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, for instance, records the progress of the Aryans up to the *Sadānīrā*, identified with the *Karatoyā*, and to the east of that river.[1] The *Karatoyā*, we know, was the ancient boundary of Prāgjyotiṣa in the west, and the source perhaps points to the spread of the Aryan culture to the land before the Buddhistic period. The *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* gives further indication of the spread of that culture to Kāmarūpa.[2] The *Gopatha Brāhmaṇa* records a tradition of the origin of the name of Kāmarūpa,[3] indicating an early contact of the Aryan and non-Aryan elements. Moreover, the internal evidence of the Vedic literature itself not only throws light on the question of the Aryanisation of Eastern India at an early period, but also gives an indication of the composition of certain portions of the Vedic texts by the *Ṛṣis* from the said region.

The next important sources, the *Gṛhya* and *Dharmasūtras*, composed probably in between 700-600 B.C. and A.D-200[4] are valuable for the study of the political and cultural life of the people of India in general.[5] Similarly important are the works of Pāṇini and Patañjali. Prāgjyotiṣa finds mention in the *Śāṅkhyāyana Gṛhyasaṁgraha* as the land of sunrise.[6] This is confirmed by references from the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* (58, 109) and the *Bṛhatsaṁhitā*, based on the *Parāśara Tantra*[7] of the beginning of the Christian era.[8]

Kauṭilya in his *Arthaśāstra* makes an important reference to many places of Kāmarūpa, such as *Suvarṇakuḍya*, *Pāralauhitya*, etc., in connection with the economic products of Kāmarūpa.[9]

The next important sources are the *Epics*, which give an illuminating picture of the political and social life of the people. In the opinion of Macdonell, the kernel of the *Rāmāyaṇa* was composed before 500 B.C., but the latter portions were probably not composed till 200 B.C. or even later.[10] The *Mahābhārata* may have been compiled between 500 B.C. and A.D. 400.[11] The *Ādikāṇḍa* of the *Rāmāyaṇa* (Chap. xxxv) records

1. *Śatapatha Br.* I, IV, I, 14-15; *S.B.E.*, XII, I, Intro., pp. XLI f, pp. 104f; Weber, *Indian Studies*, I, pp. 170f.
2. *A. Br.* 1, 3, 7; Dikshitar, *I.H.Q.*, XXI, pp. 29-33.
3. Published in (Nos. 215-252 of the Bibl. Ind.); also Bloomfield. *J.A.O.S.*, XIX, 1-11.
4. *Camb. 'History of India'* I. p. 227.
5. R. K. Mookerji, *Hindu Civilisation*, pp. 120f.
6. Chap. II. 38 (Banaras Sanskrit Series).
7. H. Kern, *Intro, to Bṛhatsaṁhitā*, p. 32.
8. H. C. Chakladar, *Studies in the Kāmasūtra*, p. 72; J. C. Ghosh, *J.A.R.S.* V, pp. 117-118.
9. *Arthaśāstra*, BK. 11, Chapter XI; also (S.S. tr.) pp. 82f
10. *History of Sanskrit Literature*. p. 309.
11. Macdonell, *Ibid.*

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the foundation of the city of Prāgjyotiṣa by Amūrtarāja. The *Kiṣkindhyā-kāṇḍa* (xlii) refers to Naraka's city of Prāgjyotiṣa in the *Varāha* mountain. The same references to the city and the country of Prāgjyotiṣa and to Naraka and his family, along with the *Kirātas*, *Cīnas* and other people, are found among others in the *Sabhā* (xxvi-xxx), *Aśvamedha* (lxxv-lxxvi), *Udyoga* (xviii), *Droṇa* (xxvi-xxx), *Bhīṣma* and *Karṇa* (v) *Parvans* of the *Mahābhārata*.

The *Bṛhatsaṁhitā* of Varāhamihira, ascribed to about the fifth century A.D.,[12] refers to both *Prāgjyotiṣa* and the *Lauhitya*, along with *Magadha*, *Cīna* and *Kambhoja*.[13]

Some *Smṛtis*, both earlier and later compilations, like those of Manu, Kāmaṇḍaka, Yājñavalkya and others, including a few texts with Assamese versions like the *Smṛti-sāgarasāra* of Dāmodara Miśra, are useful for their bearing on the political and social life of the people of India. They may be used with advantage for a study of some of the allied problems of the history of ancient Assam, though their references in most cases are theoretical and general.

Of the numerous dramas, plays, court-epics and historical or semi-historical works, there are some which may be utilised for the contemporary history of Kāmarūpa. The first important work is the *Raghuvaṁśa* of Kālidāsa, which is placed in the 5th century A.D.[14] In his account of Raghu's '*Digvijaya*' (iv, 81-84), Kālidāsa refers to both Prāgjyotiṣa and Kāmarūpa lying to the east of the Brahmaputra, standing for the same kingdom. As a source of historical material, the work is not very useful.

Daṇḍin, who wrote his *Daśakumāracarita* about the 6th century A.D.,[15] mentions that Vikaṭavarman married a daughter of the Kāmarūpa king Kalindavarman. Collins supposes that Videha and Kāmarūpa were united by this marriage alliance.[16] The identification of the Kāmarūpa king is difficult, and we cannot rely upon the stories of Daṇḍin, as they are fictitious.

12. See H. Kern, *Introduction to Bṛhatsaṁhitā*, pp. 2-3.
13. Chaps., XIV, 6; XVI, I. The work states thus:

Prāgjyotiṣa-Lauhitya Kṣīroda-samudra-puruṣādāḥ ।
Śakayavana-Magadheśvara Prāgjyotiṣa-Cīna-Kāmbhojāḥ ॥

14. M. Collins, *Geographical Data of the Raghuvaṁśa and Daśakumāracarita*, p. 48 (f.n.); also M. Chakravarti, *J.R.A.S.*, 1904, p. 160.
15. *Daśakumāracarita* (ed. Buhler and Peterson); also Macdonell, *India's Past*. p. 130; M. Collins, p. 46.
16. M. Collins, pp. 22-23 (f.n.), 112-13, 125-26.

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Puruṣottama, the writer of *Trikāṇḍa*, who probably flourished during the 7th century A.D.,[17] states that Prāgjyotiṣa is in Kāmarūpa.[18] The reference is to Prāgjyotiṣa as a smaller area, included within the kingdom of Kāmarūpa or the former stands for the capital city

The *Harṣacarita* of Bāṇabhatta, attributed to the early part of the 7th century A.D., contains much historical material for the period of Bhāskaravarman. Both for political and cultural history, the work is of great value for the study of the 7th century Kāmarūpa.

The *Mūdrārākṣasa* of Viśākhadatta makes an important reference to Avantivarman. The work is placed between the 5th and the 9th century A.D.,[19] but the probable date appears to be the later half of the 7th century A.D. We shall try to prove that Avantivarman was a Kāmarūpa king.

Vākpati, who wrote his *Gauḍavaho* during the 8th century A.D.,[20] refers to the murder of the lord of Gauḍa and Magadha by Yaśovarman of Kanauj.[21] On the basis of epigraphy and other sources, we shall try to prove that the former ruler was Harṣadeva of Kāmarūpa. The *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa*, a Buddhist work, is useful for contemporary history of Kāmarūpa.

Rājaśekhara, who flourished during the 9th century A.D.[22] in his *Kāvyamīmāṁsā*, (Chap. 17) places Prāgjyotiṣa among the countries in the east, and mentions Kāmarūpa as a mountain.[23] In his *Kārpūramañjarī*,[24] he refers to both Kāmarūpa and *Karṇasuvarṇa* along with Campā, Rāḍhā and Hārīkela. Yādavaprakāśa, who flourished about the 10th century A.D.,[25] in his *Vaijayantī* mentions Prāgjyotiṣa and Kāmarūpa as lying in the east: (*Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa-prāgjālika.*)[26]

Kṣemendra, who flourished between 1020—1040,[27] in his *Abhidhānacintāmaṇi* (iv, 977) mentions *Devīkoṭa*, *Uṣāvana*, *Koṭīvarṣa* and *Śoṇita-*

17. A.A. Macdonell, *India's Past*, p. 142.
18. *Trikāṇḍa*, p. 31.
19. S. Sastri, *IHQ*, III, pp. 163-67; Charpentier, *I.H.Q.*, VI, p. 629; Jacobi, *Viena Oriental Journal*, II, pp. 212-16; Keith, *J.R.A.S.*, 1909, pp. 145-49; Macdonell, *India's Past*, p. 111.
20. Macdonell, *India's Past*, p. 103.
21. Ed. S. P. Pandit and N.B. Utgikar, vv, 354, 414, 417.
22. Macdonell, p. 111.
23. *Kāvyamīmāṁsā*, p. 93; in the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* (109/57) it is *Kāmarūpe-mahāśaile.*
24. Ed. M. M. Ghosh, Intro., XXIII, p. 5; and (note, p. 70).
25. Macdonell, p. 14; *Vaijayantī*, (ed. Gustav Oppert).
26. See D. C. Ganguly, *I.H.Q.*, XIX, pp 214-224.
27. Weber, *History of Indian Literature*, p. 213.

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pura as other names of *Bāṇapura*, probably referring to the city now called Tezpur in Assam.[28] This is confirmed by the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* (1, xxi, 5, xxxii—xxxiii) and the *Śānti Parvan* (339, 90-91) and a number of existing ruins.[29]

Somadeva, who flourished between A.D. 1063-81,[30] in his *Kathāsaritsāgara*, mentions *Udayādri* as the abode of the *siddhas*, situated to the east of *Puṇḍra*. This was the *Udayācala* of the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*, which mentions it along with the *Lauhitya* and Kāmarūpa as lying in the east. The *Varāha Purāṇa* (117, 31f) also mentions *Udayācala*, *Kālaprīya* and *Mūlasthāna* as important centres of sun-worship. All these prove that *Udayācala* or *Udayādri*, associated with Kāmarūpa, is to be located in Assam, and, therefore, R.C. Hazra's location of *Udayācala* in Orissa,[31] appears to be wrong.

Hemacandra, who flourished between 1088-1172,[32] mentions in his *Abhidhānacintāmaṇi* (iv, 22) Prāgjyotiṣa and Kāmarūpa, and agrees with Yādavaprakāśa in taking Prāgjyotiṣa as another name of Kāmarūpa: (*Prāgjyotiṣāḥ Kāmarūpāḥ*).

Bilhaṇa's *Vikramāṅkadevacarita*, which is dated about A.D. 1085, refers to the invasion of Kāmarūpa.[33] The contemporary king of Assam was probably Harṣapāla of the Pāla line.

Sandhyākaranandī's *Rāmacarita*, which was probably composed during the first half of the 12th century A.D., refers to the conquest of Kāmarūpa by Rāmapāla's general, Mayana.[34] We shall try to prove that the contemporary king was Jayapāla.

Kalhaṇa's *Rājataraṅgiṇī* also throws some light on ancient Assam. The work is attributed to about A.D. 1148-49.[35] It refers to Amṛtaprabhā, the daughter of a Kāmarūpa king, married to Meghavāhana of Kāśmīra. It also mentions Lalitāditya's campaigns as far as the Lauhitya.[36]

Yaśodhara, the author of the *Jayamaṅgalā* commentary on the *Kāmasūtra*, whose work is attributed to the 13th century A.D.,[37] places Kāma-

28. See D. R. Bhandarkar, *A.B.O.R.I.*, XII, pp. 103f.
29. P. Bhattacharya, *J.A.S.B.*, (N.S.), V, pp. 19-20.
30. Macdonell, *India's Past*, pp. 116f.
31. *Bhāratīya Vidyā*, IV, II, pp. 212-216.
32. Weber, *History of Indian Literature*, p. 287f.
33. *Chapter* III, 74; ed. Bühler, Introduction, p. 23.
34. *Chapter* III, 47; ed. H. P. Sastri, *M.A.S.B.*, III, pp. 1-56.
35. M. A. Stein, *Rājataraṅgiṇī*, I, p. 6; Macdonell, *India's Past*, p. 246.
36. *Bks.* II, 147-48; III, 9-10; IV, 171.
37. Macdonell, *India's Past*, p. 174.

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rūpa among the countries in the east along with Gauḍa : (*Gauḍa-Kāma-rūpakāḥ prācya-viśeṣāḥ*).[38]

(b) *The Purāṇas :* Both the earlier and later *Purāṇas* are useful particularly for the period for which we have little or no reliable evidence. The genealogies contained therein generally treat the contemporary dynasties as successive, and are, therefore, defective from the standpoint of chronology. Prāgjyotiṣa and Kāmarūpa along with its rulers, find mention in most of them. The *Garuḍa Purāṇa* (Chap. 89) mentions Kāmarūpa and Kāmākhyā as great centres of pilgrimage. The *Nāradīya Purāṇa* (Chap. i, ii, xxxviii) refers to Hiḍimbā. The *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* (57-58) mentions Prāgjyotiṣa along with *Udayācala, Lauhitya* and Kāmarūpa as countries in the east.[38a] The same work (66/8) mentions that Svārociṣ Manu gave his son a noble city on a hill in Kāmarūpa:

Prācyāntu vijayaṁ nāma kāmarūpe nagopari |
Vijayāya sutāyādau sa dadau puramuttamaṁ ||

It (109) further refers to the temple of the sun in Kāmarūpa. The *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* (i, iv, v, xxix) mentions the Boar incarnation of *Viṣṇu*, the installation of Naraka in Prāgjyotiṣa, the murder of the latter and the establishment of Bhagadatta. This is also mentioned in the *Harivaṁśa* (63-64). The same *Purāṇa* (ii, iii) refers to the *Kirātas* and other people of Kāmarūpa, to Bāṇa of *Śoṇitapura* (i, xxi; v, xxxiif), and to Bhīṣmaka of *Kuṇḍīna* (v, xxvi). The *Brahma Purāṇa* (114-15) relates the story of the birth of Naraka in *Kokāmukhatīrtha*. The *Vāyu Purāṇa* (45) includes Prāgjyotiṣa and the *Lauhitya* along with others among countries in the east. The *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa* (27) mentions *Prāgjyotiṣa* as a kingdom. The *Skanda Purāṇa* refers to the prevalence of the *Śakti* faith in *Kāmarūpa*. The *Agni Purāṇa* refers to Bāṇa of *Śoṇitapura*. But, of all the *Purāṇas*, the most important work is the *Kālikā Purāṇa*, which was composed in Assam itself in or about the tenth century A.D.[39] The work is invaluable for the materials it contains on both the political and cultural history of Ancient Assam.

(c) *Tāntrik-Buddhist works and Assamese Chronicles :* The next important sources are the Tāntrik-Buddhist literature of Eastern India, Tibet and Nepal and the chronicles of Assam. Though some of them belong to a period later than the 12th century A.D., they are important

38. *Kāmasūtra*, p. 225.
38a. The reference in the *Purāṇa* is: *Prāgjyotiṣāḥ salauhityāḥ*. (58/13). Again :
Prāgjyotiṣāśca madrāśca videhāstāmraliptakāḥ |
Mallā-magadha-gomantāḥ prācyā janapadāḥ smṛtāḥ (57/44). ||

39. J. Eggeling, *India Office Library* (*London*) *Catalogue*, VI, pp. 1189-92 (No. 3339); p. 1192 (No. 3343); Keith, *Catalogue of Sanskrit and Palm Leaves Manuscripts in the India Office Library*. II, p. 907-8; also J. C. Roy, *Bhāratavarṣa*, XVII, II, p. 677.

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in that most of them contain materials preserving early traditions. All the Tāntrik-Buddhist works make important mention of Kāmarūpa-Kāmākhyā and other *pīṭhas* of Assam. *The Hevajra Tantra* of the 7th -8th century A.D., mentions Kāmarūpa as one of the four *pīṭhas* of India. Kāmarūpa finds mention in the *Ṣaṭpañcāṣaddeśa-vibhāga*, based on the *Śaktisaṁgama Tantra*.[40] Similar divisions are found in an earlier work, mentioned in the *Candragarbha Sūtra* by Narendrayaśa, who flourished in about A.D. 566, and similar names, including Kāmarūpa, are found in the *Sanmoha Tantra*.[41] The *Kāmarūpa Yātrā*, a Sanskrit work, composed in Assam, based on the *Yoginī Tantra*, the *Kālikā Purāṇa* and the *Kulārṇava*, deals with the mode of worship of Kāmākhyā. It also records the origin of the names of Prāgjyotiṣa and Kāmarūpa. The *Tikṣakalpa*, another Tāntrik work, deals with the worship of Tārā and the ancient geography of Kāmarūpa. The *Kāmākhyā Tantra* also deals with the account of Naraka-Bhagadatta. The *Yoginī Tantra* is of special importance for the material it contains on the ancient geography of the land and the cultural conditions of the people. *The Dīpikāchanda* of Puruṣottama Gajapati, another religious work, contains legendary accounts of the rulers of ancient Assam. The *Hara-Gaurī-Saṁvāda* contains an important list of kings of the ancient period.[42] Of the other Tāntrik works that have bearing on the period, the following are useful: *Pag Som Zon Zan, Grub'tob* and *Bka Abab Bdun Idan, Kahgyur* and *Tangyur*, all Tāntrik works of Tibet; *Dākārṇava*, *Kaulajñānanirṇaya*, *Akulavīra Tantra* and *Kāmākhyā Guhyasiddhi*, attributed to Mīnanātha; *Vyaktabhāvānugatatattvasiddhi*, attributed to Sahajayoginīcintā;[43] *Gorakṣasaṁhitā; Gorakṣavijaya; Kulārṇava: Kāmaratna Tantra*, attributed to Gorakṣanātha; *Sādhanāmālā*, and other works which contain valuable information about the religious history of Assam during the Tāntrik-Buddhist period.

Of all the works, the chronicles of Assam are by far the most important. As has already been noticed, a few of the religious works and the Purāṇas, like the *Kālikā Purāṇa*, the *Yoginī Tantra* and the *Hara-Gaurī-Saṁvāda*, contain valuable information both for political and cultural history. The genealogy of the rulers, given in works like the *Hara-Gaurī Vilāsa*,[44] in the accounts of the family of Dimaruā and the *Bhūñyār Puthi*, as in the *Hara-Gaurī-Saṁvāda*, are important. The *Hara-Gaurī Vilāsa* gives the ancient geography of the land. No less important are the old manuscripts, covering almost all the political and cultural subjects, composed in both

40. *Bk.*, III, VII, 10; D. C. Sircar, *Geography of Ancient & Medieval India*, pp. 68f.
41. D. C. Sircar, *I.C.*, VIII, pp. 33-64.
42. *Chapters* VI-VII; also P. C. Bagchi, *I.H.Q.*, XVIII, pp. 231-60.
43. See B. Bhattacharya, *Introduction to Buddhist Esoterism.*
44. Gait, *Report on the Progress of Historical Research in Assam*, 1897.

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Sanskrit and Assamese, a large number of which have been preserved at the D.H.A.S.[44a] The accounts given in the chronicles convince us that more or less systematic records of the past were kept, which maybe regarded as supplementary materials for history, particularly when these are found to be corroborated by epigraphy. The families mentioned in the works are also known from epigraphy, and at least some accounts contain actual history. It is, however, true that history and traditions have been mixed together, and no chronicle depicts a complete picture of the cultural condition of the people or gives a detailed account of all the rulers; the accounts have in most cases certainly committed the mistake of treating contemporary lines as successive ones; but the chronological difficulty appears in some cases to have been partially removed by the significant mention of the leading members of the families like those of Naraka, Mādhava, Jitāri, etc. So some of them help us to write an outline of the early history of Assam.[45]

(d) *The Buddhist sources :* No definite mention of either Prāgjyotiṣa or Kāmarūpa is made in the early Buddhist or Jain records, and it is not included among the sixteen *Mahājanapadas* of the *Nikāyas.*[46] It is probable that during the 6th century B.C. or at a later time Prāgjyotiṣa was included in the greater kingdom of Magadha, and the land did not engage the attention of the Buddhist writers. But *Lohicca*, identified with the *Lauhitya*, finds mention in the *Nikāyas*, which refer to two *Brāhmaṇas* from the country of the *Lauhitya.*[47] The evidence proves that as early as the period of the *Nikāyas*, the *Lauhitya* region, which probably included Prāgjyotiṣa, entered into the pale of the Buddhist geographical knowledge and attained a fair reputation as a centre of Brāhmaṇical culture.

The Buddhist literature of Tibet, Nepal and Bhutan associates Kāmārūpa with the *Mahāpari-nirvāṇa* of the Buddha, which is said to have taken place either at modern Śuālkuchi or Hājo.[49] This is confirmed by the Hungarian traveller Csoma de Koros;[50] but, as we shall show, the tradition is unfounded, as it has been proved that the event took place in *Kuśinagara* in modern Gorakhpur.[51] It is possible that

44a. See H. C. Goswami, *Des Cat. of the Ass. Mss*; and P. C. Choudhury, *A Cat. of Sanskrit Mss. at the D.H.A.S.*
45. See S. K. Bhuyan, *I.H.Q.*, V, pp. 460-65.
46. *Anguttara Nikāya*, I, 213; IV, 252, 256, 260.
47. *Dīgha Nikāya*, I, 224; *Saṁyutta Nikāya*, IV, 117.
48. See B. M. Barua, *I.H.Q.*, XXIII. pp. 203-205.
49. See Waddell, *Buddhism of Tibet*, pp. 307f.
50. *A. Res*, XX, p. 295.
51. Cunningham, *A.S. Rept.*, I, XVIII, XXII; W. Hoey, *J.A.S.B.*, 1900, I, pp. 74f; *Ibid*, 1901, pp. 29f.

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Kāmarūpa was known to the Buddhist world by another name,[52] and some relics of the Buddha were carried to the land and enshrined at either Kāmākhyā or Hājo, most likely at the former place. In any case, no definite information on Kāmarūpa and her people is preserved in the early Buddhist and Jain works.

3. **Foreign accounts :**

(a) *Chinese sources* : Though in Chinese sources Kāmarūpa is chiefly mentioned in connection with the visit of Yuan Chwang during the 7th century A. D. , commercial and cultural relations between this kingdom and China through Burma and other routes are testified by earlier sources like the accounts left by Chang Kien of the second century B.C.[53] The accounts of the *Shung Shu* (A. D. 420-79) record the sending of two embassies from India to China , of which one was sent by Yu Chai in A. D. 428 from the Kapili valley.[54] We shall try to prove that the king from the Kapili was Kalyāṇavarman and the region is to be located in modern Nowgong. Yuan Chwang's association with Bhāskara and his visit to *Kamolup'o* (Kāmarūpa) and the accounts that he left on the people and the country are of special importance for the political and cultural history of the land.[55] The date of his visit (A. D. 642-43) is one of the sheet-anchors in the chronology of Assam's history. The *T'ang Shu* mentions Kāmarūpa as *Kamopo* or *Komelu*.[56] The records of I-Tsing[57] throw a new light on Devavarmā of Eastern India, who held sway over the *Nālandā* region. We shall show that the king was Avantivarman or Śālastambha. The account of Wang-heuen-tse's mission[58] throws light on the history of the period immediately after the death of Harṣa of Kanauj. Bhāskara's diplomatic and cultural relations with China and his keen interest in Chinese religion are also testified by two other Chinese missions which came to India after Yuan Chwang.[59] The Chinese sources in short are valuable for our period.

(b) *Greek and Roman sources :* Classical writers from about the 5th century B. C. onwards seem to refer to the people and place names of ancient Assam, and in the earlier sources it is possible that the land

52. L. W. Shakespear, *History of Upper Assam, etc.* pp. 73f; *C. R.*, XLV, 1867, pp. 509-532. Even now Assam is reputedly known as Waisālilong. In the Tibetan Buddhist works it is *Kahgyur* and *Tangyur*.
53. See P. C. Bagchi, *India and China*, pp. 7f, 16f.
54. G. E. Gerini, *J.R.A.S.*, 1910, pp. 1187-1201.
55. *Life*, pp. 165f; T. Watters, I, p. 348; II, pp. 185f; S. Beal, I, pp. 215f; II, pp. 195f.
56. T. Watters, II, pp. 185f.
57. *Life, Intro.*, pp. XXXVI—XXXVII.
58. *J.A.S.B.* VI, p. 69; *I.A.*, IX, p. 14.
59. P. C. Bagchi, *India and China*, pp. 200f.

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was either known by other names or included in the kingdom of the Prasii and the Gangaridae. It is difficult, however, to identify the places and peoples mentioned by them. Hecataeus of Miletus (500 B. C.) mentions such peoples as the Indoi, Kakatiai, Opiai, etc., of India.[60] Herodotus mentions the Kalatiai along with Gandarioi and Padaioi.[61] Can Kakatiai or Kalatiai be identified with the Kalitās of Assam ? It is possible that, due to their predominance, some part of Kāmarūpa was known as the land of the Kalitās. Both Megasthenes and Strabo refer to the Derdai of the east, who were noted for their working in gold.[62] It is probable that the reference is to some hill people of Assam. Strabo, referring to the Prasioi and Palibothra, mentions the river Oidanes falling with the Ganges into the sea.[63] Curtius (viii) mentions Dyardanes as a river flowing through the remotest part of India.[64] It is possible to identify Strabo's Oidanes and Curtius's Dyardanes with Ptolemy's Doanes or the Brahmaputra. Pliny in his Natural History (vi) not only refers to a number of people of the frontier and trans-Himalayan regions, some having unusual features, probably referring to some Tibeto-Burman tribes of Assam in the north, but also speaks of races from the chain of the Exodus, of which a spur is called the Imaus. The Exodus is identified with the Himalayas, and Imaus stands probably for some hills in Assam. The same references are found in Arrian.[65] Among the people mentioned are the Chisiotosagi or Chiriotosagi, identified with the Kirātas.[66] Pliny mentions the Mandai, living on the Mount Maleus, and lying beyond Palibothra in the east.[67] It is possible to identify Mandai with the Gāros, as they are called *Mānde* (man).[68] Pliny next mentions beyond the Ganges a number of people including Colubae or *Koluta*, Orxulae, Abali and others.[69] The Orxulae and the Abali were probably the Akās and the Ābars of Assam and the Colubae or *Koluta* were the Kalitās.

The other important Classical sources, mentioning peoples and places which may possibly be identified as in Assam, are the *Periplus of the Erythrean Sea* of the first century A. D., *Ptolemy's Geography* of the 2nd century A. D., Pomponius Mela, Ammianus Marcellinus, Pausanius, Dionysius, Aelian, Ctesias and others. For the ancient geography of

60. See McCrindle, *Ancient India as Described in Classical literature*, Intro, XIV.
61. *Ancient India as Described by Megasthenes and Arrian*, p. 6 (f.n.).
62. McCrindle identifies them with the people of Dardistan. (*Ancient India in Classical Lit.*, p. 51).
63. *Ibid.*, p. 42.
64. *Ibid.*, p. 77 (f.n. 3).
65. *Megasthenes and Arrian*, p. 182.
66. *Ibid.*, pp. 131f, 173.
67. *Ibid.*, pp. 53 (f.n.), 131f, 156f.
68. A. Plafair, *Garos*, pp. 7f.
69. *Megasthenes and Arrian*, pp. 131f.

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Assam, both the *Periplus* and *Ptolemy's Geography* are very useful. Their references to people and places of Assam are also supported by later writers. We have dealt with their geography in another place. We may conclude here by stating that, judged by the stray references of the classical writers, though in some cases vague, the mention of a number of tribes almost in their present habitat in Assam, is important, particularly for the first two or three centuries A. D., when our own accounts do not give so much information. It will appear that the land and her people were known to the classical writers from the 5th century B. C. to the 2nd century A. D.

(c) *Muslim and other sources :* In Alberuni's India, Kāmarūpa is mentioned as lying far to the east of Kanauj, the mountains of which stretch as far as the sea.[70] Minhājuddīn Sirāj, who wrote his *Tabaqāt-i-Nāsirī* during the 13th century A. D. gives us valuable information regarding *Kāmrū*, *Kāmrūd* or *Kāmarūpa* in connection with the invasions of Bakhtiyar in (S. E. 1127= A. D. 1205-6); Ghiāsuddīn in A. D. 1226; Nāsiruddīn in A. D. 1228 and Yuzbak in A. D. 1256-57. These accounts are supported by the *Riyāz-us-salātin.*[71] The informations, these works contain, have been examined in another place, and it is seen that except Nāsiruddīn, none of these early Muslim invaders could occupy any part of Assam; on the contrary, they had to meet with complete failure. The accounts are important in that they depict also the cultural condition of the people in general.

The accounts of the later travellers like Qazim,[72] Tavernier,[73] and the Hungarian visitor to India, Csoma de Koros also supply us with useful informations, throwing light on contemporary events.

4. Archaeological evidence :

(a) *Coins :* Numismatic evidence is one of the most reliable sources for the study of early history of any land, especially when the coins help us in determining the chronology of a dynasty. But, unfortunately not a single coin of the early period has so far been discovered, and this is no doubt one of the reasons why we are faced with great difficulty in determining the chronology of the rulers of the period. There is hardly any dynasty in ancient India which did not issue coins of its own, and it is, therefore, reasonable to suppose that the rulers of Kāmarūpa as well

70. Sachau, *Alberuni's India*, p. 201.
71. Abudus Salam, *Riyāz-us-salātin*, pp. 65f.
72. *A. Res.*, II, pp. 170f.
73. V. Ball, *Travels in India, Bk.* III, Chap. XVII.

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minted coins of their own. This is strengthened by the fact that literature, beginning with the third century B. C.[74] and inscriptions[75] refer to royal coins. It may be mentioned in passing that coins of almost all the dynasties, including the Āhoms, established in Assam after the extinction of the Pāla line of kings, and of certain Bengal Sultans, have been discovered.

(b) *Inscriptions :* The local epigraphs are important for the political and cultural history of our period. They have been found engraved on copper plates and rocks and impressed on clay seals. Besides their literary value, they record donation of lands, commemorate achievements of rulers along with their ideals, and refer to diplomatic relations with contemporary powers and other facts of historical import. The genealogies they contain partly confirm those given in the chronicles. But, most of them are undated, and only a few have recorded the regnal years of rulers. Even the genealogies are not entirely unbroken. Only two epigraphs, dated in the Gupta era, have been found, the Baḍagaṅgā inscription of Bhūtivarman (G. E. 234= A. D. 553-54) and the Tezpur Rock inscription of Harjjara (G. E. 510=A. D. 829-830), and three dated in the *Śaka* era have been discovered. It is curious that a local era, which was probably started by Bhāskara in A. D. 594, as proved by an Assamese manuscript,[76] was discarded in favour of those of other dynasties. The following epigraphs have so far been discovered :

(*i*) *Local epigraphs :* (1) The rock-cut inscription of Surendravarman,[77] ascribed to about the fifth century A. D. It is incised in a few words on the Kāmākhyā Hill. (*Assam Tribune*, Gauhāti, June 26, 1955).

(2) The Baḍagaṅgā epigraph of Bhūtivarman (G. E. 234=A. D. 553-54). It is incised in 3¼ lines on a rock near *Ḍavāka* in modern Nowgong. (*E. I.*, 1947, 18-23; *J. A. R. S.*, VIII, pp. 138-49; *I.H.Q.*, XXI, 143 f.).

74. *Arthaśāstra* (Bhattasvāmī's Com., *J.B.O.R.S.*, XI, pp. 62f.); also Schoff, *The Periplus*, pp. 47-48, 258-59; Taylor, *J.A.S.B.*, 1847, I, pp. 20-26; McCrindle, *The Commerce and Navigation of the Erythrean Sea*, p. 31.

75. The Kāmarūpa king Jayapāla is stated to have made a *tulāpuruṣa* gift of 900 gold coins to the Brāhmaṇa Prahāsa. The king belonged to the Pāla family. (*E.I.*, XIII, pp. 289f).

76. See *Kāmarūpar Buranjī*, Appendix (ed. S. K. Bhuyan). The *nṛpaśaka* found in certain manuscripts also stands for this Kāmarūpa era, started by the King.

77. The inscription is read as : *Mahārājādhirāja śrī Surendravarman kṛtya Bhāgavataḥ Balabhadrasvāmine idānigṛhaṁ.* As no such ruler is found in the genealogy of the Varman family, he has been identified with Mahendravarman. This is the earliest known inscription from the period.

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(3) The Doobi grant of Bhāskaravarman. It was found at Doobi. It consists of six plates, of which the last one is broken. In point of time it is earlier than the Nidhanpur grant. (*J. A. R. S.*, XI, pp. 33-38; *Ibid*, XII, pp. 16-33; D. C. Sircar, *I. H. Q.*, XXVI, pp. 241-46).

(4) The Nidhanpur grant of Bhāskaravarman. The plates were seven, of which one is missing, and were found in a village called Nidhanpur in modern Sylhet. (*E. I.* XII, pp. 65f; *Ibid*, XIX pp. 118f, 245-50; *K. S.* pp. 1-43; *B. S. P. P.* (N. 4), 1319 and *Vijayā*, *Āṣāḍh*, 1320). The grant is but a confirmation of that issued by Bhūtivarmā about a century earlier.

(5) The three Nālandā Clay Seals of Bhāskaravarman (Dikshit, *A. R. A. S. I.*, 1917-18, p. 45; R. D. Banerji, *J. B. O. R. S.*, V, pp. 302-303; Dikshit, *J. B. O. R. S.*, VI., pp. 151-52; K. L. Barua, *J. A. R. S.*, IV, pp. 89f; H. N. Śāstrī, *M. A. S. I.* (N. 66).

(6) The Hayuṅthāl grant of Harjjaravarman. It was found in Hayuṅthāl in Nowgong; only the second of the three plates was found. (P. Bhattacharya, *J. A. R. S.*, I, pp. 109f; *K. S.*, pp. 44-53).

(7) The Tezpur rock inscription of Harjjara. (G. E. 510=A. D. 829-30). It is incised on a boulder and contains nine lines. (Marshall, *A. R. A. S. I.*, 1902-3, p. 229; H. P. Śāştrī, *J. B. O. R. S.*, 1917, pp. 508-14; P. Bhattacharya, *K. S.*, pp. 185-92; *Pratibhā* (17th year), Nos. 3 & 4).

(8) The Tezpur grant of Vanamāla. It consists of three plates, found in Tezpur. (*J. A. S. B.*, IX, II, pp. 766f; P. Bhattacharya, *K. S.*, pp. 54-70; *R.S. P.P.*, (No. 1), 1321).

(9) The Parbatīyā Plates of Vanamāla. It consists of three plates, found near Tezpur. (*E. I.*, XXIX, pp. 145-59).

(10) The Uttarbarbil (Howraghat, Mikir Hills) Plates of Balavarman III. It consists of three plates. (P. C. Choudhury, *Asom Sāhitya Sabhā Patrikā*, 15th year, No. 3, pp. 187-94).

(11) The Nowgong grant of Balavarman III. It consists of three plates, and was found in Sūtargāon in Nowgong. (Hoernle, *J. A. S. B.*, LXVI, I, pp. 285-97; P. Bhattacharya, *K. S.*, pp. 71-88; *R. S. P. P.*, No. 2, 1317).

(12) The Bargāon grant of Ratnapāla. It consists of three plates, and was found in Bargāon, Tezpur. (Hoernle, *J. A. S. B.*, LXVII, I, pp. 99f; P. Bhattacharya, *K. S.*, pp. 88-109; *B. S. P. P.*, No. 1, 1322).

(13) The Śuālkuchi grant of Ratnapāla. It originally consisted of three plates, but one is missing. (Hoernle, *J. A. S. B.*, LXVII, I, pp. 120-25; P. Bhattacharya, *K. S.*, pp. 110-15).

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(14) The Gauhati grant of Indrapāla. It consists of three plates, and was originally found in Barpanara (Darrang). (Hoernle, *J. A. S.B.*, LXVI, I, pp. 113-32; P. Bhattacharya, *K. S.*, pp. 116-29; *R. S. P. P.*, Nos. 2&4, 1319).

(15) The Guākuchi grant of Indrapāla, found in the village of Guākuchi near modern Nalbari. It consists of three plates. (P. Bhattacharya, *K. S.*, pp. 130-45; *R. S. P. P.*, 1336).

(16) The Gāchtal inscription of Gopāla, found at Gāchtal near Ḍavāka (Nowgong). It consists of two plates. The copper ring containing the royal seal and one plate are found missing : (D.H.A.S,)

(17) The Khonāmukhi grant of Dharmapāla, found at Khonāmukhi, Nowgong; it consists of three plates. (P. D. Chaudhury, *J. A. R. S.*, VIII, pp. 113-126; N. K. Bhattasali, *J. A. R. S.*, IX, 1-3).

(18) The Śubhaṅkarapāṭaka grant of Dharmapāla. It consists of three plates; the find-spot is not known. (P. Bhattacharya, *K. S.*, pp. 146-167).

(19) The Puṣpabhadrā grant of Dharmapāla, found on the northern bank of the Brahmaputra near North Gauhati. (P. Bhattacharya, *K. S.*, pp. 168-84).

(20) The Śilimpúr grant of Prahāsa, found inscribed on a stone slab in Śilimpur of the Bogra district in Bengal. It records a *tulāpuruṣa* gift by Jayapāla. (R. G. Basak, *E. I.*, XIII, pp. 289-95).

(21) The Kamauli grant of Vaidyadeva. It consists of three plates and was found in Banaras. (A. Venis, *E. I.*, II, pp. 347-58; *Gauḍalekhamālā*, pp. 127-46).

(22) The Assam plates of Vallabhadeva (S. E. 1107=A. D. 1185). It consists of five plates. (Kielhorn, *E. I.*, V, pp. 181-88).

(23) The Kāṇāi Varaśī inscription of North Gauhati (S. E. 1127= A. D. 1206). (*K. S.*, Intro., p. 44).

(24) The Gāchtal inscription in Nowgong found at Gāchtal. It is incised on a stone pillar containing 24 lines, each with five letters. (Bhattasali, *I. H. Q.*, XXII, pp. 12-14).

(ii) *Some contemporary epigraphs from other parts of India :*

(1) The Allahabad Pillar *Praśasti* of Samudragupta. It mentions the frontier kings of *Kāmarūpa* and *Ḍavāka* during the 4th century A. D. (Fleet, *C. I. I.*, III, pp. 1f).

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(2) The Mandaśor epigraph of Yaśodharman (M. E. 589= A. D. 532-33). It mentions Yaśodharman's invasion up to the neighbourhood of the Lauhitya. (Fleet, *C. I. I.* III, pp. 142f).

(3) The Aphsad epigraph of Ādityasena. It refers to the conflict between Mahāsenagupta and Susthitavarman. (Fleet, *C.I.I.*, III, pp. 200-208).

(4) The Tippera grant of Lokanātha (44). It refers to his liege-lord Jayatuṅgavarṣa and another feudatory prince, Jīvadhāraṇa. (Basak, *E.I.*, XV, pp. 301-312). We shall try to prove that Jayatuṅga was Bhāskaravarman.

(5) The Paśupati inscription of the Nepal king Jayadeva II (153). It refers to Harṣadeva, the conqueror of *Gauḍa*, *Kalinga*, *Kośala* and other lands. (Bhagavanlal Indraji, *I.A.*, IX, pp. 178f).

(6) The Samangaḍ inscription of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa king Dantidurga (S.E. 674=A.D. 752). It refers to a clash between Harṣadeva and Kīrtivarman, the Western Chalukya ruler. (*I.A.*, 1882, p. 114).

(7) The Bhāgalpur grant of Nārāyaṇapāla of Gauḍa. (*I.A.*, XV, pp. 304f). It refers to diplomatic relations between Prāgjyotiṣa, Gauḍa and Orissa during Devapāla's reign.

(8) The grant of the Ganga king Anantavarman (A.D. 922). It refers to the donation of land to Viṣṇusomācārya from Kāmarūpa. (*E.I.*, XXVI, pp. 62-68).

(9) The grant of the Paramāra king Vākpati Rāja (A.D. 981). It mentions the donation of land to Vāmanasvāmī, who was probably from Kāmarūpa. (*E.I.* XXIII, p. 109).

(10) The Belāva grant of Bhojavarman. It refers to a conflict between Jātavarman and a Kāmarūpa ruler. (*E.I.*, XII, pp. 37-44).

(11) The Deopārā inscription of Vijaya Sena. It mentions the submission of a Kāmarūpa ruler to him. (*E.I.*, I, p. 305).

(12) The Mādhāinagar grant of Lakṣmaṇa Sena. Here this ruler is said to have subdued Kāmarūpa. (*J.A.S.B.*, (N.S.), 1909, pp. 467f.

(c) *Prehistoric finds and other ancient remains:* (i) *Neoliths and Megaliths:* The remains of the undated history of our period consist of neoliths, megaliths and pottery. These are helpful for the study of the pre-Aryan and non-Aryan elements in Assam. The study of the subject as a whole will give us an idea of the link of the various

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people with those of the other parts of India and the Oceanic world, and help us in understanding the origin and foundation of Assam's culture.

(ii) *Monuments of the historical period:* The monuments of the historical period, beginning at least with the 5th to the 12th century A.D., are found scattered throughout the land. These consist of remains of architecture, sculpture and images. As a subject of historical study, they are useful not only for their artistic value but also for the light they throw on the religious conditions of the people. Epigraphy[78] proves that most of the rulers were responsible for the erection of temples, buildings, fortified cities, etc. The extensive remains, mostly associated with religion, also testify to the devotional zeal of the rulers and the ruled. The temples and images of the various deities of different faiths supply us with information on the state of social and religious life of the people. Though primarily dedicated to the deities of the Hindu or the Buddhist faiths, some of them strongly suggest non-Aryan influences.

One of the earliest specimens, ascribed to the 5th century A.D., is found in the region of Dah Parvatiā (Tezpur). Similar remains of monuments of the period, ranging from the 6th to the 12th century A.D., have been found scattered throughout the plains and hill areas of the State, indicating the nature and extent of cultural progress of the people in general. But all these are surface finds. A reference in this connection may be made to the archaeological finds of great value, discovered recently on a small hillock at Narakāsurgāon.[79] Similar finds, throwing light on the period of Assam's history, we have dealt with, will come to light in large numbers if excavation work is undertaken in and around Gauhati alone, the Prāgjyotiṣapura of our records, enabling us to forge a link between the different phases of her political and cultural development throughout the centuries.

78. Tezpur grant of Vanamāla, V 24; Nowgong grant, V 14; Bargāon grant, Lines, 31-32; Gauhāti grant, V 10.

79. P. C. Choudhury, *J. A. R. S.*, XVI, pp. 57-59 : The finds among others give an idea of the existence of a royal *Deva* temple or temples, where mostly *Āryya* deities were propitiated, centering round *Indra*. This confirms also the observation made by Yuan Chwang who saw hundreds of *Deva* temples in Kāmarūpa.

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CHAPTER III

GEOGRAPHY

1. Location and divisions :

"Hemmed in between the Eastern Himalayas, Southern Tibet, China, Burma and Nepal, the hills and valleys of the Brahmaputra, occupy a somewhat secluded and inaccessible portion of Asia.......The upper central valley throws out on either side into the adjoining mountains hundreds of rugged glens....Then rounding the rocky promontory of the Gāro Hills, the valley turns at a right angle sharply southern to the Delta of Bengal, extending a branch eastwards to the Cāchār Hills,"[1] But, in spite of this isolation, the province throughout her history remained in close contact with South-east Asia as with India in the west through the river valleys and mountain passes. Assam presents us with the picture of a diverse physical conditions with hills and dales, forests and marshes, rivers and plains, elevations and depressions. In dealing with her geography, we refer to the pre-partition boundary including Sylhet, which formed almost at all times an integral part of this land, both geographically and culturally.[2]

The modern State of Assam lies between latitudes 28′ 18' and 24° N. and longitudes 89° 46′ and 97° 4′E. It is bounded on the north by the sub-Himalayan ranges of the Bhutan, Akā, Dafalā, Miri, Ābar and Mishmi, which have taken their names from the tribes inhabiting them. The northern boundary between this land and Tibet still remains ill-defined.[3] On the east the country is bounded by the Pāṭkāi range, a spur of the Assam Range of the Himalayas; on the south-east by the Nagā Hills, bordering on Burma; on the south by the Lushāi Hills extending to the confines of Burma; on the south-west by the Hill Tippera and Mymensingh,

1. Waddell. *J. A. S. B.*, LXIX, III, pp. 8f.

2. B. K. Barua's opinion (*Cultural History of Assam*, I, p. 2 (f. n. 2) that Sylhet was outside Assam, seems unwarranted in view of many historical references on the contrary: (See Political History, Section 2)

3. See Robert Reid. '*The Excluded Areas of Assam*', *G. J.*, CIII, pp. 18-29; Mills, '*The Assam-Burma Frontier*', *Ibid.*, LXVII, pp. 289-301.

The MacMahon line being the internationally recognised boundary line, this should remain as such in so far as the Northern boundary is concerned. The people inhabiting the regions at the foot of the Himalayas and beyond to the north held centuries old economic and cultural contact with the people of the plains. Traces of Buddhism that we find in Kameng and other areas are no doubt predominantly Tibetan. This has been quite possible in view of very old close cultural contact between Assam and Tibet.

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and on the west by the Gāro Hills and the river *Soṅkoṣa*, making the natural boundary between this land and Bengal. Taking NEFA as the component part of Assam, its northern boundary has touched the Mac Mahon line, bounded by Bhutan and Tibet to the west, the Tibetan and Sikang regions to the North and east and Burma to the South-east.. The topography of the State has not yet been fully described.[4] In the ancient period, the boundaries were at times extended beyond the modern geographical limits, particularly in the west and south-west towards Bengal.

The modern State of Assam may be divided broadly into two river valleys, the Brahmaputra valley, watered by the Brahmaputra throughout its length from Sadiyā in the north-east to Dhubri in the west, and by its tributaries on both sides of its bank; and the Suramā valley, mainly watered by the *Suramā* river. The former again may be divided into three regions, the *Uttarakūla*, the *Dakṣiṇakūla* and the Mājuli to the north of modern Śivsāgar, formed by the Brahmaputra. Geographically, the land may conveniently be divided into two parts—the plains and the hills. The plains comprise modern Goālpārā, Kāmrūpa, Darrang, Nowgong, Śivsāgar, Lakṣīmpur, Sylhet and Maṇipur; the hills consist of the Gāro, Khāsi-Jaintīā, Cāchār and Mikir Hills ,Nagā and Lushāi (Mizo) Hills, and of the frontier tracts of Bālipārā and Sadiyā.[4a] Geographically, if not culturally, the present NEFA regions form a compact area with the other regions of the State. According to geological researches, most of the hilly areas were formed in the period of the tertiary age and these are full of mineral deposits.

2. Origin of the name Assam :

The origin of the name Assam is uncertain. The word is an Anglicised form of the Assamese word *Asama*. It is curious that while the Shān invaders called themselves Ṭāi, they came to be known as Āsām, Āsam, Asam and Acam, a name, which is believed to have been derived from the Āhoms. Gait writes that the term in the sense of 'the peerless' was applied to the Shāns by the local people.[5] He further adds that Assam was known to the Burmese as *Athan*. B.K. Kākati points out that *Asama*, peerless, may be a Sanskritisation of some earlier formation like *Āchām*. In Ṭāi (Āhom), *Chām* means to be defeated, and with the prefix 'Ā', the

4. See Martin, *Eastern India*, III, p. 626.

4a. With the independence of India many changes have taken place in respect of the geographical unit. Assam, of which the creation of the NEFA and the Naga land has been most significant; full consequences thereof are yet to be seen. In 1954 the five divisions of Kameng, Suvansiri, Siang, Lohit, Tirap and Tuensang constituting the NEFA were created, but in 1957, when the state of Nagaland was created, Tuensang was reunited with it.

5. Gait, *History of Assam*, p. 245-46.

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formation '*Āsām*' would mean undefeated. The word '*Asama*', first given to the Shāns (Āhoms), was later on applied to the country.[6] B. Bhattacharya points out that the *Vajrayāna* sect and the Boodhisattvas are called '*asama*' in the *Sādhanāmālā* and so the name of the country may be associated with them.[7] In Qazim and *Padshāhnāmā* the name is Asam[8] and Tavernier took it as Asem.[9] It is also suggested that Siam is called *Āshān* or land of the monks. The Shān, according to Grierson, is the Burmese corruption of the original word *Shām*;[10] so it is held that the Shān or Shām or Āshān, coming to Assam, may have given the name to the region.[11] This is not yet established. It is probable that the name was first applied to the land by the *Boḍos*, a Tibeto-Burman people, as it may be derived from a *Boḍo* formation like *Hā-com*, meaning low land.[12] If this derivation is correct, the name *Asama* may go back to a period long before the coming of the Shāns or the Āhoms; because the Tibeto-Burmans must have entered Assam long before them.[12a] It, appears, therefore, reasonable to suggest that the Sanskrit formation '*Asama*' is based on an earlier *Boḍo* form, *Hā-com*. A distant association of *Asama* with *Saumāra* (*pīṭha*) of the *Purāṇas* and the *Tantras* cannot also be ruled out. In discussing the ancient geography of Assam, we refer to this land by its ancient name *Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa*, because the word *Asama* does not find mention either in early literature or in epigraphs. It is likely that during the Buddhistic period, as we have already stated, the land was known by another name. In examining the Classical sources, we shall show reasons to believe that this land was in ancient days known by different names.

3. Origin and antiquity of Prāgjyotiṣa :

The name *Prāgjyotiṣa* is commonly associated with the *Lauhitya*, *Kāmarūpa* and *Kāmākhyā*. It occurs both in epigraphs and literature. It is also associated with all the rulers of the period, beginning with Naraka-Bhagadatta. The origin of the word is difficult to guess. It stood for

6. *Assamese— Its Formation and Development*, pp. 2-3; *N. I. A.*, I, pp. 1-23; *Aspects of Early Assamese Literature*, pp. 1-2.
7. *I. H. Q.*, III, p. 421.
8. *J. A S. B.*, XLI, p. 55.
9. *Travels in India*, I, p. 16; II. p. 277.
10. *L. S. I.*, II, p. 59.
11. B. K. Barua, *J. A. R. S.*, II, pp. 102-4.
12. Badan Powell, *Indian Village Community*, p. 135. S. K. Chatterji has suggested different interpretations for the origin of the words *Āhom* and *Assam* : (*The Place of Assam in the History and Civilisation of India*, G. U., 1955).
12a. With whatever people the origin of the name of the land is associated, it appears certain that it has a bearing on its topography or physical features. Historically, Assam did not attract the attention of the compilers of the *Purāṇas* and the *Tantras*, to whom Kāmarūpa was both a geographical unit standing for entire Assam and a spiritual entity. The Saumārapīṭha was only a division of this Kāmarūpa.

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both the city and the country. The name appears to be a Sanskritisation of some non-Aryan formation. It is suggested that the people called Chao Theius of China, coming to India, came to be known as *Zuthis* and occupied three important centres; the branch coming to Assam was called *Prāg Zuthis* which was subsequently changed into *Prāgjyotiṣa.*[13] This ethnological derivation is doubtful. B.K. Kākati connects Prāgjyotiṣa with the topography of the land and derives from an Austric phrase : *Pagar juh* (*jo*)-*tic* (*c*'=*ch*), meaning a region of extensive hills.[14] The antiquity of the name Prāgjyotiṣa cannot be traced earlier than the *Śāṅkhyāyana Gṛhyasaṁgraha*, which mentions it as a sacred country, associated with the solar cult,[15] and the *Rāmāyaṇa*, which refers to its foundation by an Aryan chief Amūrtarāja.[16] The interpretation of the name as a place of 'eastern astrology' is, however, justified by a number of references to its association with the solar cult and the planetary worship. Udayācala of the *Saṁhitās* and the *Purāṇas* was no other than Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa.[17] The archaeological remains also point to the prevalence of the solar cult, and the existing temple of Navagraha in Gauhāti and Sūryya Pāhār in Goālpārā justify this origin of the name of the land. The *Kālikā Purāṇa's* evidence that *Brahma* made the first calculation of the stars in Prāgjyotiṣa, points to the early importance of the place in astrology and astronomy. This is confirmed by a number of Assamese manuscripts, dealing with these subjects. There is a grain of truth in the statement that the first astronomical observation in Assam was made in Navagraha.[18] The *Mārkaṇḍeya*, *Kālikā* and other *Purāṇas* point to the prevalence of the solar cult and fire worship in the land and the Assamese festival '*Bihu*' is associated with fire worship and fertility rites, the relics of a vanishing Austric and Alpine-Iranian culture in ancient Assam. It is, therefore, likely that the name Prāgjyotiṣa is only a relic of the prevalence of the solar cult which we have discussed in another connection. Spooner rightly points to the astronomical significance of the name in connection with the Magian culture in Prāgjyotiṣa.[19] The name in fact, has a reference to the Aryan contact with the non-Aryans.[19a]

13. R. M. Nath, *The Back-ground of Assamese Culture*, pp. 4-5.
14. *The Mother Goddess Kāmākhyā*, p.6; *Puraṇi Kāmarūpar Dharmar Dhārā*, p. 9.
15. *Chap.* II, 38.
16. *Ādikāṇḍa*, XXXV.
17. See J. C. Ghosh, *J. A. R. S.*, V, pp. 117-18.
18. See P. Bhattacharya, *J. A. R. S.*, X, pp. 73-81.
19. *J. R. A. S.*, 1915, II, pp. 433-36.

19a. The modern village of Jatīā and Dispur lying on the western and eastern sides of Gauhati respectively stand jointly for the ancient city of (*Prāg*) *Jyotiṣpura*.

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4. Ancient Assam and the Classical writers—the Periplus of the Erythrean Sea :

We have pointed out the possibility of Prāgjyotiṣa being known to the classical writers, at least from the first century A.D., by other names, though the identification of the names of places and peoples, mentioned in their works is difficult. The first important classical work, which we, believe, mentions Assam, is the *Periplus of the Erythrean Sea.*[20] Our identification rests on the order of description of the regions, one after another, and on significant references to various peoples. The *Periplus* states thus : From Masalia the course lies eastward across a bay to Desarena. Leaving this, the course is to the north, passing through a number of tribes, including Kirrhadae. After passing them the course turns again to the east, and sailing with the coast on the left and the sea on the right, you arrive at the Ganges and the extremity of the continent towards the east called Chryse. There is a mart on the Ganges of the same name through which passes a considerable traffic, consisting of the Gangetic spikenard, pearls, betel and the Gangetic muslims. In Chryse there is said to be a gold mine and a gold coin called *kaltis.* Immediately after leaving the Ganges, there is an island in the ocean called Chryse which lies directly under the rising sun and at the extremity of the world towards the east. This island produces the finest tortoise-shell that is found throughout the Erythrean sea. But beyond this (*This*) immediately under the north at a certain point, where the exterior sea terminates, lies a city called Thina, not on the coast but inland, from which raw and manufactured silk are brought by land through Bactria to Barygaza or else down the Ganges to Bengal and then by sea to Limurika or the coast of Malabar. To Thina itself the means of approach are very difficult and from Thina few merchants come, but very rarely. On the confines of Thina an annual mart is held and the Sesatae assembled there and did their marketing. The regions beyond this towards the north are unexplored either on account of the severity of the winter, the continuation of the frost or the difficulties of the country.

Masalia can be identified with the present Masulipatam in Bengal, and the bay leading to Desarena, with Sunderband area or the Upper part of the Bay of Bengal.[21] The Kirrhadae is identified with the *Kirātas*, [22] who inhabited parts of south-east Bengal, and western Assam, including Sylhet and Tripurā. The mart on the Ganges may be located in present

20. See Vincent, *Periplus of the Erythrean Sea*, II, pp. 523-28; Schoff, *The Preriplus* pp. 47f; Whiteley, *The Periplus*, 1940, pp. 134f.
21. Taylor, *J. A. S. B.*, 1847, I, pp. 6-8.
22. Schoff, p. 253; *J. A. S. B.*, 1847, I. pp. 10-11.

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Vikramapura near Dacca; the place of gold mine is located by some in Tripurā and the coin *kaltis* is said to have belonged to the lower part of Bengal. Taylor locates Chryse in Arakan and Pegu, which also may have included Malacca and Sumatra.[23] McCrindle identifies it with Malacca,[24] and Whiteley with the Malaya Peninsula.[25] Chryse is mentioned also by Pomponius Mela, (iii, 7, 70) and according to him it lay off the Ganges. Pliny (vi, 80) places it along with Argyre off the mouth of the Indus; but the location is very vague. Schoff identifies the place of gold with Chota-nagpur and Chryse with Malacca.[26] But, following the routes of the *Periplus*, it appears probable that the place of the gold mine and Chryse lay almost in the same locality, to the east of the Ganges in the south-western part of Assam, or Tripurā. Schoff himself admits that gold was brought to India through Tripurā from the rivers of Assam.[27] This was noticed also by Tavernier who holds that both gold and silk from Assam were sent overland to China. He further adds that the washing of gold in Assam yielded a substantial quantity.[28] It is likely, as suggested by Taylor, that the place of gold was somewhere in Tripurā which was within Prāgjyotiṣa. The land of Chryse might have included portions of south-west Assam, south-east Bengal and Burma, and even have extended to the Philippines. As regards the coin *kaltis*, Benfey connects it with the Sanskrit word *kalitā* (numbered).[29] It may be suggested that the coin bears the name of the Kalitās of Assam, who for a long time may have ruled the land. Speaking of Chryse, N.K. Bhattasali writes that it stands for "Soṇdvīp at the mouth of the united waters of the Ganges and the Brahmaputra".[30] It may be mentioned that Kauṭilya associates *Suvar-ṇakuḍya* in Kāmarūpa with the production of the best specimen of gold.[31] As we have suggested, Chryse may have stood for a vast area, which included also parts of Assam and Bengal.

The Periplus's land of *This* with an inland city Thina, according to Schoff, is to be located in the western part of China; but he identifies the Sesatae doing marketing in malabathrum with the people allied to the Kuki-Chins, Nagās, Gāros and other allied tribes of Assam.[32] Whiteley[33]

23. Taylor, *J. A. S. B.*, 1847, I, pp. 20-27.
24. *Commerce and Navigation of the Erythrean Sea*, pp. 145-49.
25. *The Periplus*, (Intro), p. 10, pp. 565f.
26. *The Periplus*, pp. 47-48, 258-59.
27. *Ibid.*
28. *Travels*, Vol. II. p. 281; Ball, *Economic Geology of India*, p. 218-31.
29. See McCrindle, *Commerce and Navigation of the Erythrean Sea*, p. 31.
30. *I. H. Q.*, XXII, pp. 245-52; Antiquities of Son-Ganges and its courses: *Science and Culture*, Nov. 1941.
31. *Arthaśāstra*, (S. S. tr.) pp. 82f; N. N. Das Gupta, *I. C.*, V, pp. 333-341.
32. *The Periplus*, pp. 47-48, 261, 278.
33. *The Periplus*, (Intro), p. 10, pp. 567f.

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and McCrindle[34] locate Thina in China, though the latter identifies the Sesatae with the people living in the vicinity of Sylhet.[35]

None of these identifications seems correct. From the statements in the *Periplus* it appears that the Sesatae were probably a people allied to the Gāros. If this be so, it is a far cry from the tribes of Assam, who assembled between their own country and Thina for marketing, to Western China. One confusing statement in the *Periplus* is the description of trade routes by which silk was exported from Thina; but the accounts seem to yield that one route lay through the mountain passes of Nepal, leading to Bactria where silk from Assam was purchased by merchants who were on their way to India and who afterwards sailed down the Indus to Barygaza or Gujarāṭ; the other route to Bengal and then to Limurika by sea lay through the Brahmaputra and the Ganges. If Schoff's reading of the name, '*This*', is tenable, it is likely that it stands for the last two syllables of Prāgjyotiṣa with its capital Thina and the people Thinae. Even to-day a village near Gauhāti is known as *Dispur*, and the village of Jatiā with Dispur stands jointly for Jyotiṣpur, which with the addition of prefix, *Prāg* makes *Prāgjyotiṣpur*. In making this identification, it must be remembered that the ancient boundary of Prāgjyotiṣa extended up to the sea through south-east Bengal. Therefore, when we find "that in historical times the kingdom of Prāgjyotiṣa included Sylhet, Tippera and Noakhali districts and thus extended up to the sea-coast, we at once realise that the author of the *Periplus*, in talking of *This*, is really meaning Prāgjyotiṣa".[36] Taylor locates the country of the Thinae in eastern Assam and identifies the capital Thina with Sera of Ptolemy. He also derives the Thinae from the Ṭāi race and identifies them with the Sinae of Ptolemy, located in eastern Assam.[37] But, as we have stated, the land of *This* with its capital Thina covered a large area, extending from south-east Bengal to the eastern limits of modern Assam. Taylor's derivation of the Thinae from the Ṭāi or the Sinae from the Shyāns appears improbable, because as far as we know the Ṭāi people could hardly enter Assam during the first century A.D. He rightly identifies the Sesatae with the Besadae of Ptolemy, located near the Moirandos, and points out that the marketing habits of the former, as given in the *Periplus*, correspond to those of the hill tribes of Assam.[38]

The unexplored regions beyond Thina refer to the north-eastern part of the Himalayas, which, according to Wilson, are the north-eastern parts

34. *Commerce and Navigation, etc.* pp. 145f.
35. *Ancient India as described in Classical Literature*, p. 218,
36. N. K. Bhattasali, *I. H. Q.*, XXII, pp. 245-52.
37. *J. A. S. B.*, 1847, I, pp. 29-30.
38. *Ibid*, pp. 32f.

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of Assam, designated by Ptolemy as Ottorocaras. The same reference is made by Ammianus Marcellinus.[39] It appears from these accounts that in the first century A.D. the land of *This* with its capital Thina was identical with Prāgjyotiṣa.

5. References in Ptolemy's Geography and other sources :

The *Geography of Ptolemy*, a work of about A.D. 150 contains useful information. Ptolemy mentions the country of the Seres, which according to Taylor, stands, like Thina of the *Periplus*, for Assam, while the name Seres appears like the Thinae to have been applied to the inhabitants of the plains and the hills.[40] This identification is based on the geography of the regions described by Ptolemy. We shall, however, try to confirm our contention on the basis of the observations of other earlier and later writers. Pomponius Mela (iii, vii), for instance, mentions the land of the Seres as being situated between India and Scythia. They are said to have been noted for their commerce. The reference, is, however, vague. But it is likely that the people, mentioned by Mela correspond to the Sesatae of the *Periplus*. Pliny (vi, xvii—xxii) gives a similar description of the Seres and mentions the country as noted for silk which its forests produced. In speaking of the embassy from Ceylon to the Roman emperor Claudius, he represents the chief ambassador as stating that the people of Ceylon knew the Seres through trade and that the ambassadors' father often visited them. Pliny mentions the river Psitaras, which may be identified with Teesta, in the land of the Seres, and records that merchants placed their goods on the further side of that river. If the Seres wanted to barter, they took goods which were deposited there and left the commodities which the foreign merchants wanted in exchange. These people may be the Bhutias or other hill tribes of Western Assam.[41] We have traditions of a brisk trade carried on with Lankā (Ceylon) by the sea-route.

Pausanius mentions two nations of the Seres, of which the Scythic Seres, according to Taylor, may be taken as the Thinae or Sinae of the *Periplus*.[42] Dionysius mentions similar hill people of Assam, allied to the Sesatae. He refers also to silk, which from its description may be the tassar or dyed *mugā* silk of Assam.[43] Aelian mentions Schiratae or Siratae, who were either the *Kirātas* or the Sesatae of the *Periplus*. The Seres, mentioned by Horace (I, 29) were the mountain peoples of Assam,

39. See Taylor, *J. A. S. B.*, 1847, I, p. 43.
40. *Ibid.*, pp. 43f.
41. *J. A. S. B*, 1847, I, p. 43f.
42. *Ibid.*, p. 45.
43. *Ibid.*, p. 46.

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who are said to have been expert in the use of bows and arrows. Ctesias and Aelian mention the fruit of a tree called *siptachora*, from which amber exuded, and upon which was noticed a small insect yielding a purple dye. The reference is probably to the country of Assam where the lac insect is found in abundance and red dye is prepared from lac. The hill people, in the opinion of Wilford, based on the accounts of Ctesias, collected the amber and prepared materials with the purple dye, and carried the whole in boats along with the dried fruit of the tree to other parts of India including Magadha.[44] The reference is probably to the hill tribes of Assam, such as the *Bodos*. Ctesias mentions the river Hyperchos which proceeded from the country where *siptachora* was grown and which produced all good things.[45] If the river may be identified with the Brahmaputra, it appears probable that the country of *siptachora* or the lac tree, refers to Assam, and the things referred to, were the products of the land.[46]

We have mentioned elsewhere Strabo's reference to the river Oidanes falling with the Ganges into the sea,[47] and Curtius's reference to the Dyardanes, flowing through the remotest part of India;[48] we have also suggested the identification of Oidanes, Dyardanes and Ptolemy's Doanes with the Brahmaputra. Strabo further mentions the country of the Seres which abounded in elephants. The reference strongly supports the location of the country of the Seres in Assam, because Assam is one of the few countries where elephants were abundantly found as they are to-day. Ptolemy describes the Seres and the Sinae as neighbours. He describes Serica as being bounded on the east and the north by unknown regions and on the south by 'India-extra-Gangem' and the country of the Sinae. This evidently refers to Upper Assam. The journey of the caravan from Byzantium to the frontier of Serica, as described by Ptolemy, seems to agree with the accounts of the *Periplus* of the route from Thina to Bactria or the route through Bhutan to Kabul and then to Balkh.

It appears from a later writer, Tavernier that the merchants who traded with the Seres were not allowed to enter the latter country, but they carried on traffic with them at an opening or pass in the mountain Imaus.[49] On the evidence from Arrian and Pliny, (vi) it is possible to identify Imaus, a spur of the Exodus or the Himalayas[50] with some hills of Northern Assam. Pliny mentions another route to Serica via Palibothra (i, xvii). This was

44. *A. Res.*, IX, p. 65.
45. Heeren, *Asiatic Nations*, II, App. IV, p. 380.
46. See Taylor, *J. A. S. B.*, 1847, I, 46-47.
47. See McCrindle, *Ancient India as described in Classical Literature*, p. 42.
48. *Ibid.*, p. 77 (f. n. 3).
49. Taylor, *J. A. S. B.*, 1847, I, p. 48.
50. McCrindle, *Megasthenes and Arrian*, p. 182.

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through the Brahmaputra to Assam or the route by the Ganges, mentioned in the *Periplus*, by which goods were exported to Limurika by sea through Bengal.

Ptolemy states that to the east of Serica there are hills and forests where canes are grown and these are used as bridges. The reference is very important, as even to-day canes are found abundantly in the hills and forests of Assam, and most of the hill tribes use them as bridges. He also mentions that Serica is surrounded by hills and the country is traversed by two large rivers, Occardes and Bautes, which may be identified with the Sanpo and the Brahmaputra. Some of the hills, mentioned by Ptolemy are Annubi, identified with the Akā Hills; Casius is perhaps the Mishmi Hills; the mount Thagurus appears to be Reging (Ābar Hills), and the chain of the Emodi (Himalayas) is probably the mountains separating Assam from Tibet.[51]

The location of the country of the Seres and Serica in Assam is also based on our identification of some of the hill tribes, mentioned by Ptolemy and confirmed by Ammianus Marcellinus; some of them can be located almost in their present habitat.[52]

Ammianus Marcellinus gives (xxii, vi) a general account of the physical features, extent, fertility and people of Serica, extending to the Ganges and abounding in silk; his accounts correspond in general to those of Ptolemy. We suggest that his Anniva is the Annubi of Ptolemy; Nazavicium is the Nagā Hills, since the people living there are called by Ptolemy Nagalogoe. His Asmira is the range of hills inhabited by the Miris, and Emoden is the Himalayas. His description of the two rivers running through Serica corresponds to that of Ptolemy. Both mention Asmira and Essendon, Aspararta and Sera as famous towns of Serica. Sera stands for the capital of the Sinae. Taylor locates Asmira in present Laksimpur; Essedon somewhere near Rangpur and Aspararta in Charduar;[53] but their actual location is doubtful. Ptolemy mentions other places which are difficult to identify. Ammianus mentions silk from the land of the Seres under the name of Sericum, and states that the people exported the article to other lands. Other important articles mentioned are skin, iron aloe, musk and rhinoceros's horns. The mention of aloe and musk and particularly of rhinoceros is very important evidence for the location of the country of the Seres and Serica in Assam, for even to-day rhinoceros

51. Taylor, pp. 52f.
52. See Chap. IV, Section 2.
53. *J. A. S. B.*, 1847, 1, pp. 53f.

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abounds in the forests of Assam. All these references indicate that Ptolemy's Sera and Serica stand for Thina and the Sinae of the *Periplus*,[54] and refer to Prāgjyotiṣa with its capital Thina or *Prāgjyotiṣapura*. The country, during the 1st-2nd century A.D., covered not only Eastern Assam but also extended to South-east Bengal.

Other details in Ptolemy deal with the geography and peoples of other parts of Assam. Airrhadai of Ptolemy is identified by Gerini with the country of the Andhras.[55] In our opinion, it may be identified with the country of the *Kirātas* or Ptolemy's Kirrhadae. Gerini locates the country of the latter in Sylhet, Tripurā and Cāchār in Assam. While the same writer takes Trilingon or Triglyton as identical with Kuladan near about Chittagong, Yule locates it in Tripurā.[56] Tugma is located by Gerini in Cāchār or Maṇipur; Mareura in Old Prome and Pentapolis in Tripurā.[57] The identification of Mareura with Maṇipur appears more probable in view of the geography of the area. Beyond Kirrhadia, Ptolemy mentions the Zamirai, located near Moirandos near the Gāro Hills and Sylhet, and Tiladai to the north of the Moirandos. Ptolemy places Dobassai towards the north between the Bapyrrhos and the Dobassa ranges. Gerini, identifying Dobassai with *Ḍavāka*, locates the place in Upper Burma,[58] which is wrong. *Ḍavāka* is to be located in the Kapili valley in Assam. Bapyrrhos, from which the river Doanes or the Brahmaputra is said to have taken its rise, cannot be identified, as done by Gerini, with the Pātkāi Hills.[59] It is certainly a portion of the Himalayas. Ringberi of Ptolemy is identified by Yule with a place in Assam and by Gerini with one in Burma.[60] But the similarity of sound suggests its identification with Rangpur in Upper Assam. Kudutai of Ptolemy, derived from *Kuluta*,[61] may be identified with the *Kalitā*, and it is likely that Barrhai of Ptolemy[62] is identical with the *Boḍos*. Gerini rightly identifies Ptolemy's Alosonga with Shillong,[63] Tiladai with the Kuki-Chins;[64] but his identification of Besadae with the Mishmis,[65] is hardly correct. They may be identical with the Sesatae of the *Periplus*, standing probably for the Gāros and other Boḍos.

54. See Taylor, *Ibid.*, pp. 55-59.
55. *Researches on Ptolemy's Geography*, p. 28.
56. Gerini, *Ibid*, pp. 30-31.
57. *Ibid*, pp. 33-36.
58. *Ibid*, pp. 52f.
59. Gerini, pp. 134f, 281f.
60. *Ibid*, p. 138.
61. *Ibid*, p. 356.
62. Ibid, pp. 362f.
63. *Ibid*, p. 830.
64. *Ibid*, pp. 744, 830.
65. *Ibid*, p. 830.

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It appears from the accounts of both the *Periplus* and Ptolemy's geography that their authors knew something of the geography and peoples of Assam and that during the Ist-2nd century A. D. if not earlier, the land was known as Thina or Seres and extended from the extreme Sadiya region to South-east Bengal. This, as we have tried to show, appears to be confirmed by other classical sources, both earlier and later, which point only to the antiquity of the land of Prāgjyotiṣa. The area of the capital city was as large, if not larger, as the present greater Gauhati areas extending to Beltola in the south, the northern boundary being the Brahmaputra. The archaeological finds discovered over a vast area in and around the city of Gauhati bear testimony to the existence of the capital city here. The area from Dispur to Jatīā-Narakāsurgāon and beyond to the west, lying to the south of Kālāpāhār, surrounded by hills on all sides and marked by rock-cut images of Gaṇeśa at the four corners included perhaps the royal establishments including fortresses. The capital was no doubt at times extended beyond the Brahmaputra.[65a]

6. **Origin and antiquity of Kāmarūpa and Kāmākhyā :**

We have already mentioned the non-Aryan origin of the name *Prāgjyotiṣa* and its association with astronomy. The words *Kāmarūpa* and *Kāmākhyā* also suggest an Austric or Alpine origin. *Kāmākhyā* is probably derived from an Austric formation, such as *kamoi* (demon) in old Khmer; *kamoit* (devil) in Chām; *kamet* (corpse) in Khāsi; *komui* (grave) or *komuoch* (corpse) in Santālī. It may be a substitution of the word like *komuoch*, meaning grave or the dead.[66] *Kāmarūpa* is derived from the formations like *kāmru*, or *kāmrut*, the name of a lesser divinity in Santālī, and the land is thus associated with magic or necromancy.[67] Both *Kāmarūpa* and *Kāmākhyā* are closely associated in literature. B. K. Kakati thinks that the word *Kāmarūpa* symbolises a new cult, and in exhaltation of it the land was re-christened. The very name *Kāmarūpa-Kāmākhyā* suggests, in his opinion, that the cult is to be derived from some Austric divinity.[68] The traditional origin of the name of *Kāmarūpa*, as given in the *Gopatha Brāhmaṇa*, which relates the story of *Kāmadeva's* revival after being burnt up by *Śiva*, may be explained in the light of the prevalence of the cult of magic and sorcery, associated with the Austric-Alpine culture

65a. P. C. Choudhury, *JARS.*, XVI. pp. 57-59.
66. Kākati, *Assamese—Its Formation and Development, pp.* 53-54.
67. *Ibid; N. I. A.*, I. pp. 1-23.
68. *The Mother Goddess Kāmākhyā*, pp. 6f, 35f.
While we have definite evidence to show that the place name *Kāmarūpa* was current at least from the fourth century A. D., if not earlier, it is not known from exactly what date the name *Kāmākhyā* was used. It is almost certain that both the names came to be used from about the same period of time.

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of Assam.[69] The traditional origin of the name *Kāmākhyā* also, associated with the genital organ of *Satī*, according to the *Kālikā Purāṇa* and other works, can be explained on the basis of a pre-Aryan cult of the phallus, receiving new orientation with the introduction of Aryan culture. The legends in the *Purāṇas* and the *Tantras* may as well recall internment of the relics of the Buddha. The story is applicable to both Kāmarūpa and Kāmākhyā.[69a]

While *Kāmākhyā* finds mention only in literature, *Kāmarūpa* is also mentioned in epigraphs. That the latter is a Sanskritisation of some earlier formation, is proved by other sources. The usual name is found as *Kāmru* or *Kāmrūd* in the Buddhist *caryās*, the *Hara-Gaurī-Saṁvāda*, and the Muslim sources like the *Tabaqāt-i-Nāsirī* and the *Riyāz-us-Salātin*. Yuan Chwang mentions it as *Kamolup'o*[70] and in *T'ang-shu*, the name is given as *Kamopo* and *Komelu*.[71] Levi connects it with a formation like *Tāmalipti*.[72] The references show the Austric origin of the name *Kāmarūpa*. Even the name of the Brahmaputra, the *Lauhitya* of literature, the Tsanpo of the Tibeto-Burmans, or the Lohit (*Luit*) of the Assamese popular literature,[73] appears to have its origin in an Austric formation like *Lao-tu*, '*tu*' meaning water; similarly the *Karatoyā*, called *Kalotu* in Chinese records, may be derived from an Austric word. The *Kālikā Purāṇa* (Chap. 82) gives a mythological origin of the name of the Brahmaputra.

7. Location of Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa :

We have already located Prāgjyotiṣapura, which stands for the present villages of Jatīā and Dispur. In spite of this and the close association of *Prāgjyotiṣapura*, with the *Udayācala*, the *Lauhitya*, and *Kāmarūpa-Kāmākhyā* both in epigraphs and literature, some writers place it in regions other than in Assam. R. C. Majumdar, for instance, places Prāgjyotiṣa in Orissa and adds that a certain Patoladeva, a Sāhi ruler of Gilgit,

69. J. C. Ghosh's association of the name Kāmarūpa with the Ut-Kochas, is improbable. (*J. A. R. S.*, 1938, pp. 1f).

69a. Symbolically Kāmākhyā stands for the geographical unit, Assam, which is *trikoṇākāra*, and Kāmarūpa for spiritual entity. The latter name was so reputed that a comparatively late work, *Hara-Gaurīsaṁvāda* describes the long period of the Ahom rulers under what is styled *Kāmarūpādhikāra*. Both historically and traditionally both the names are indistinguishable, Kāmarūpa standing for *Puruṣa-Śiva* and Kāmākhyā for *Prakṛti-Devī*.

70. Watters, II, pp. 185f.

71. *Ibid.*

72. *Pre-Aryan and Pre-Dravidian in India*, pp. 114, 118.

73. The Tibetans call the Brahmaputra, Zagulchu; the Mishmis, Tellu, and Lohit is the eastern branch of Tsanpo or the Brahmaputra. (Noel Williamson, *G. J.*, XXXIV, pp. 363-83; Sven Hedin, *Trans-Himalaya*, II, pp. 96f; Hamilton, *Geographical, Statistical and Historical Description, etc.*, pp. 741f).

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claims in an inscription from Hātum his descent from the Bhauma dynasty, and on the basis of this, he asserts that there was a Prāgjyotiṣa kingdom in the North-western India, and that the name of the dynasty along with the place name was later carried to Assam.[74] K. V. Athavale thinks that Naraka and his successors ruled at Prāgjyotiṣa in Kāthiāwāḍ and it was Vajradatta who went to Assam. He locates the original Prāgjyotiṣa, therefore, not far from the *Raivataka* hills, and holds that Vajradatta carried the name of the place and the dynasty to Kāmarūpa.[75] B. C. Law, on the basis of the *Kiṣkindhyākāṇḍa* of the *Rāmāyaṇa* (Chap.42) and the *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa* (27) holds that there was another Prāgjyotiṣa on the bank of the river Vetravatī or Betwā.[76] B. M. Barua locates Prāgjyotiṣa in the Eastern Punjab. What is more improbable, he associates it with *Uttara Prāgjyotiṣapura*, the northern city of astronomy, located above *Pañcanada* and *Amaraparvata*.[77] These writers are under the impression that the *Mahābhārata* locates Prāgjyotiṣa in the west or north. The geography of the *Epics* is not accurate and, moreover, the actual interpretation of the relevant passages will only support our contention. The *Kiṣkindhyākāṇḍa* (Chap. 42) locates Prāgjyotiṣa on the *Varāha* mountain where Naraka is said to have taken his abode. The *Varāha* mountain where Prāgjyotiṣa is placed, suggests a hilly region lying contiguous to the Kāmākhyā hills extending to Pāṇḍu situated to the east of the Eastern Sea or the *Lauhitya sāgara* . It in no way suggests a location in the Punjab. The evidence from the *Mahābhārata* seems at first sight to be conflicting. In the *Sabhā Parvan* there is a mention of Bhīma's campaign in the north and his fight with Bhagadatta of Prāgjyotiṣa; but in the same *parvan* (26-30) and in the *Aśvamedha* (74-75), there is a mention of Bhīma's campaign in the *Lauhitya* region in the east. These passages can be explained, as held by P. Bhattacharya, on the assumption that Bhagadatta's kingdom extended to Nepal, Bhutan, Tibet and the frontiers of China. The *Sabhā Parvan's* (26) reference to Bhagadatta's followers, the *Cīnas* and the *Kirātas*, also indicates that his kingdom extended to the confines of China in the north and to the sea coast in south-east Bengal.[78] The location of Prāgjyotiṣa and the *Varāha* mountain is also confirmed by the *Varāha Purāṇa* and the *Brahma Purāṇa* (114-115) which refer to the birth of Naraka in the *Kokāmukhatīrtha* and to his becoming the lord of Prāgjyotiṣa. The mention of *Kauśikā* and *Triśrotā* as lying in the neighbourhood of the former place indicates that the region lay within Prāgjyotiṣa.[79]

74. *Bhāratīya Vidyā*, VI, pp. 111-112.
75. *Ibid*, VIII, pp. 250-55.
76. *I. C.*, III, pp. 731f.
77. *I. H. Q.*, XXIII, pp. 200f.
78. *K. S.* (Intro), p. 2 (f. n.).
79. Chap. 140, VV 72-75; also H. C. Choudhury, *B. C. Law Volume*, I, pp. 89-90.

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There is nothing , therefore, to suggest that Prāgjyotiṣa was in the Punjab or Kāthiāwāḍ. The existence of the Bhauma dynasty in Orissa can possibly be explained by the fact that Harṣadeva of Kāmarūpa in the 8th century A. D. may have established a relation of his there.[80]

It is also suggested that there is evidence of the existence of Kāmarūpa-Kāmākhyā elsewhere than in Assam. The *Padma Purāṇa* (*Pātāla Khaṇḍa*, V) states that the *Kāmākhyā Devī* was the presiding deity of Ahicchatra, and the poet Mukakavi Sārvabhauma composed three works in honour of Kāmākhyā of Kāñcipura.[81] The *Śiva Purāṇa* mentions that in *Sahyādri* there was a country of Kāmarūpa.[82] These references can be explained by the fact that it was the celebrity of the original Kāmarūpa-Kāmākhyā that carried the names to other lands. The existence of a temple of *Devī* in other places is not at all curious; but this does not prove that Kāmarūpa-Kāmākhyā existed in places other than in Assam.[83] That Kāmarūpa always implied Assam or at least a part of Assam, is proved by the extant literature of the period.

The close association of Prāgjyotiṣa with the *Lauhitya* and Kāmarūpa-Kāmākhyā in both epigraphs and literature points to their existence in the same region from the dawn of history. The *Arthaśāstra*, referring to various places of Kāmarūpa in connection with its industrial products,[84] confirms its location in Assam. We have examined other literary sources, beginning with the *Epics*, the *Bṛhatsaṁhitā*, the *Raghuvaṁśa* and the early *Purāṇas* and the *Tantras* which indicate that the ancient kingdom of Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa lay to the east of the *Lauhitya*. There is nothing to prove, as held by P. C. Sen, on the basis of the *Raghuvaṁśa*, that the *Prāgjyotiṣas* entered Assam from the west and the *Kāmarūpas*, who were foreigners, entered from the north-east; equally untenable is his argument that during Samudragupts's time Prāgjyotiṣa in the west was included within his empire and the Varmans ruled in the east in Kāmarūpa;[85] nor is it possible, as held by B. C. Law, that the *Prāgjyotiṣas* were a people of non-Aryan origin,[86] because by that time many Aryans had entered the kingdom, though other elements, including the Alpines, were already there. As we have pointed out, Kālidāsa, referring to Prāgjyotiṣa and Kāmarūpa, made only independent treatment of identical names,[87] and

80. Political History, Section 3.
81. H. P. Śāstrī, *Notices of Sans MSS.*, X, I, (Nos. 3268, 3291, 3295).
82. *Jñāna Saṁhitā*, 48 (Vaṅgavāsī Ed.).
83. See J. C. Ghosh, *J. A. R. S.*, VI, p. 11.
84. *Arthaśāstra*, B. K. II, Chap. XI.
85. *J. A. R. S.*. I, pp. 12-15.
86. *I. C.* III, pp. 731f.
87. M. Collins, *Geographical Data, etc.*, pp. 14-15 (f. n.); also H. N. Choudhury *J. A. R. S.*, I, pp. 103-6.

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the kingdom definitely lay to the east of the *Lauhitya*. This is confirmed by other Brāhmaṇical, Buddhist, Chinese, Classical and other sources and the epigraphs, beginning with the 5th century A. D., if not earlier.

While in the local grants, the name Kāmarūpa does not occur, Prāgjyotiṣa and *Prāgjyotiṣādhipati*, referring to the rulers, find mention in all of them. Kāmarūpa, however, finds mention for the first time in the Allahabad Pillar *Praśasti* of Samudragupta.[88] The next references occur in the Belava grant of Bhojavarman,[89] the Śilimpur grant of Prahāsa,[90] Deopārā inscription of Vijayasena,[91] Mādhāinagar grant of Lakṣmaṇasena[92] and the Kamauli grant of Vaidyadeva.[93] In the contemporary epigraphs, *Lauhitya* finds mention in the Mandaśor grant of Yaśodharman[94] and the Aphsad epigraph of Ādityasena,[95] while Prāgjyotiṣa is mentioned only once in the Bhāgalpur grant of Nārāyaṇapāla.[96] These references confirm our contention that Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa and the *Lauhitya* were contiguous and imply the same region. It is, therefore, only an imagination uncontrolled by a critical approach to its sources that will locate Prāgjyotiṣa either in the Punjab or in Kāthiāwāḍ in the *Epic* period, and in modern Assam at a later time.

8. Extension of the Kingdom :

If Prāgjyotiṣa was known to the authors of the pre-Buddhist and Buddhist literature, it was merely a name. It is difficult to determine the extent of the kingdom either of Naraka of the age of Janaka or of his successors. But it appears, on the basis of the literary evidence, that at a time when Prāgjyotiṣa was a flourishing kingdom, most parts of South-east Bengal were under the *Lohita* sea, and the Bengal Delta was just beginning to form. The confluence of the Ganges and the Brahmaputra formed this Eastern Sea, which finds mention as late as the period of the *Bṛhatsaṁhitā* of the 5th century A. D. It is likely that the southern boundary of Prāgjyotiṣa in the pre-Buddhist period or at a later time touched the sea. It is pointed out that in the *Epic* age at least, the whole of Mymensingh, including three-fourths of modern Bengal was under the *Lohita* sea, and the Brahmaputra fell into it, taking a southern course

88. Fleet, *C. I. I.*, III, pp. 1f.
89. *E. I.*, XII, pp. 37-44.
90. *E. I.*, XIII, pp. 289f.
91. *E. I.*, I, p. 305.
92. *J. A. S. B.*, V, (N.S.) pp. 467f.
93. *E. I.*, II, pp. 347f.
94. *C. I. I.*, III, pp. 142f.
95. *Ibid*, pp. 200f.
96. *I. A.*, XV, pp. 304f.

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round the Gāro Hills as it does to-day.[97] But on the other hand, the classical writers, beginning with the 4th century B. C. make mention of the Gangaridae or *Gangārāṣṭra*. Even the *Nikāyas* mention *Anga* and *Vanga* among the sixteen *Mahājanapadas*. South-east Bengal came to be known as *Samataṭa*. Even about the 1st century A. D., as appears from the *Periplus*,[98] the lands to the east of *Samataṭa*, comprising southern Mymensingh, western Sylhet and portion of Comilla and Noakhali, were probably under water. The existing evidence seems to indicate that long before the foundation of *Gauḍa* and *Puṇḍravardhana* except, however, *Anga* and *Vanga* in Southern Bengal, Prāgjyotiṣa may have included some portions of Bengal towards the south-east even when the delta was formed and many islands came up the *Lohita sāgara*.

The existing materials also convince us that the limits of Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa, from the period of the *Epics*, if not earlier, extended much beyond the modern State of Assam, particularly in the northern and south-western directions. But, we should remember that the geography of the *Epics* is far from being accurate and their references to Prāgjyotiṣa may be ascribed only to the first century A. D., or a little earlier during the time of Bhagadatta. On the evidence from the *Sabhā* (26-30), *the Aśvamedha* (74-75), the *Udyoga* and other chapters of the *Mahābhārata*, which refer to the followers of Bhagadatta, the *Cīnas* and the *Kirātas*, inhabiting the hilly regions in the north and the marshy regions near the sea, it may be held that his kingdom included not only portions of South-east Bengal but also portions of Nepal and Bhutan. P. Bhattacharya rightly points out that Bhagadatta's kingdom extended to the confines of China, Nepal or the Himalayan regions, otherwise his army could not have been consisted of the *Cīnas* and the *Kirātas*.[99] In the *Udyoga Parvan* (4) Bhagadatta is called '*pūrvasāgaravāsī*' and in the *Droṇa Parvan* (25) he is styled as '*parvatapati*'. In the *Rājasūya* of Yudhiṣṭhira (*Sabhā*, 34), Bhagadatta is said to have been present with his followers from the sea-shore. In the *Sabhā Parvan* again (51), he is said to have given as presents to Yudhiṣṭhira ivory tusks, rhinoceros's horns, etc.,[99a] indicating that Bhutan, Tibet and the hilly areas of Assam in the north were within his kingdom, along with portions of Bengal, Sylhet, Tripurā, Mymensingh, etc. On the basis of these *Epic* references, Pargiter points out that *Prāgjyotiṣa* touched the Himalayas and stretched southwards

97. See Kedar Nath Majumdar, *Mymensignher Itihāsa*, Chap. I.
98. Schoff, *Periplus of the Erythrean Sea*, pp. 47f.
99. *K. S.* Introduction, p. 2 (f.n).
99a. Bāṇa, in his *Harṣacarita*, points out that the presents sent by Bhāskaravarman to Harṣavardhana of Kanauj included those inherited from Bhagadatta and other ancestors of the kingdom of Kāmarūpa.

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along both sides of the *Lauhitya* as far as the Bengal Delta or the sea.[100] In the *Rāmāyaṇa* (*Kiṣkindhyākāṇḍa*, 42) Prāgjyotiṣa is said to have been situated on the *Varāha* mountain in the sea, which was 64 *yojanas* in extent. The mountain probably stands for the hills of the same name extending to Pāṇḍu or Assam range of the Himalayas, and the sea lay to the south of the hills, which was probably connected by the Brahmaputra with the Bay of Bengal. This sea was the *Lohita sāgara*. It is almost certain that parts of Sylhet, Mymensingh and the neighbouring lands were under water until comparatively later times. The dwellers of the marshy regions, the *Kirātas* or the Kirrhadae of the *Periplus* and Ptolemy certainly occupied the low lying regions of Tripurā, Noakhali, etc. The foundation of Prāgjyotiṣa by *Amūrtarāja*, son of *Kuśa* and grandfather of *Visvāmitra*, who performed his austerities on the bank of the *Kauśikā*, is another significant tradition. Prāgjyotiṣa lay close to *Dharmāraṇya* (*Ādikāṇḍa*, 35). It is possible that Prāgjyotiṣa extended up to the river *Kauśikā*. All these references led Pargiter to conclude that the kingdom during the time of the *Epics* included the greater portions of modern Assam, along with Koch-Bihar, Jalpāiguri, Rangpur, Bogra, Mymensingh, Dacca, Tripurā, portions of Pabna and probably a portion of Nepal.[101] But, as we have stated, the *Epics*' references have perhaps bearing on the geography of Prāgjyotiṣa during the first century A. D. or a little earlier, when Bhagadatta may have flourished,[102] and on the basis of the classical sources it may be held that about that period the kingdom extended to the north-eastern limits of modern Assam, which in the north it included the regions, covered now by the NEFA.

We have suggested in another connection that during the 6th-4th century B.C. ancient Assam was either included in the greater kingdom of Magadha, or the western boundary of the kingdom, whatever its south-western limits, hardly extended beyond the *Lauhitya* or the *Karatoyā*. During the age of Maurya imperialism and perhaps until the beginning of the Christian era, the kingdom was confined roughly to its modern boundary in the west. This is confirmed by the *Bṛhatsaṁhitā*, based on the *Parāśara Tantra* of the beginning of the Christian era.[103] Beginning with the 1st-2nd century A.D., as shown by the *Periplvs* and Ptolemy, and we believe also by the *Mahābhārata*, the south-western boundary of Prāgjyotiṣa touched the sea; the western boundary may have extended beyond

100. *J. A. S. B.*, 1887, pp. 104-5.

101. *J. A. S. B.*, 1887, p. 106.

102. *Political History*, Section I.

103. Kern, *Intro. to Bṛhatsaṁhitā*, p. 32; H. C. Chakladar, *Studies in the Kāmasūtra*, p. 72.

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the *Karatoyā* to include the region to the east of the *Kauśikā*, and in its eastern limits it was extended to the Sadiyā region. N.K. Bhattasali rightly contends "that the kingdom even in the first century A.D..... extended up to the gulf of the Meghna, probably up to Noakhali and Chittagong coasts."[104]

According to most *Purāṇas*,[105] dealing with the geography of an earlier period, the kingdom extended up to the *Karatoyā* in the west, and included Maṇipur, Jaintīā, Cāchār, parts of Mymensingh, Sylhet, Rangpur and portions of Bhutan and Nepal.[106] Beginning with the 4th century A.D., the western limit was again pushed back to the east of the *Lauhitya*. This was the time of Gupta imperialism, and Kāmarūpa was only a frontier state like *Samataṭa* and *Ḍavāka*. This is proved by the *Bṛhatsaṁhitā* (chap. xiv, 6) which places Pragjyotisa to the east of the *Lauhitya* and the sea, and by the *Raghuvaṁśa* (iv, 81-84) of about the same period, which states that *Raghu* entered Kāmarūpa after crossing the *Lauhitya*. But, during the middle of the 6th century A.D. under Bhūtivarman, with the decline of the Guptas both in Magadha and Gauḍa, the kingdom again expanded to include Puṇḍravardhana in North Bengal,[107] and portions of South-east Bengal, including *Samataṭa*, Tripurā, Noakhali and Sylhet.[108] A Tantrik work of the 6th century A.D. mentions the boundaries of Kāmarūpa. The *Śaktisangama* (iii, vii, 10) and the *Sanmoha Tantra*, both based on the *Chandragarbha Sūtra* of Narendrayaśa (A. D. 566) state that the kingdom extended from *Kāleśvara* to *Śvetagiri* and from *Tripurā* to *Nīlaparvata*, and *Gaṇeśagiri* is mentioned as lying in the heart of Kāmarūpa :[109]

Kāleśvara-śvetagiriṁ tripurānnīlaparvataṁ |
Kāmarūpābhido devī gaṇeśagiri-murddhamaṁ ||

It appears that during the 4th-5th century A.D. as long as the Guptas had paramountcy in Northern India, Kāmarūpa comprised only a limited area; but, as we have stated, *Ḍavāka*, Sylhet and Tripurā were absorbed

104. *I. H. Q.*, XXII, pp. 245-52.
105. Wilson, *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, V, p. 88 ; Lassen, *I.A.,I.*, p. 87; *Ibid*, II, p. 973
106. Martin, *Eastern India*, III, p. 403; Buchanan, *Account of Rangpur*, *J. A. S. B.*, 1838, I; *E. R. E.*, II, p. 132; Robinson, *Descriptive Account of Assam*, p. 146. According to B.C. Law (Geographical Essays, I, pp. 152f) the ancient kingdom of Kāmarūpa included great portions of North Bengal and Bihar.
107. See *Political History*, Section 2.
108. Bhattasali, *I. H. Q.*, XXI, pp. 19f.
109. D. C. Sircar, *I. C.*, VIII, pp. 33-64.

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within the kingdom during Bhūtivarman's time. From that time to the 8th century A.D., as proved by the Nidhanpur grant[110] and the Paśupati epigraph of Jayadeva II [111] and confirmed by Yuan Chwang and his biography,[112] the kingdom included *Karṇasuvarṇa*, *Puṇḍravardhana* and probably the eastern part of the *Nālandā* region.[113] During the 8th century A.D. Harṣadeva's kingdom was larger in extent than that of any previous ruler of Kāmarūpa, for he probably held possession of *Gauḍa*, *Magadha*, *Kalinga*, *Kośala* and other lands, at least for a short time.[114] With the early part of the 9th century A.D., there was perhaps a temporary set-back, but during the middle of that century, as proved by the Tezpur grant, Vanamāla's kingdom included *Puṇḍravardhana*, or almost the same area as that of Bhūtivarman, including portions of South-east Bengal.[115] During the period of the Pāla line in the 11th-12th century A.D., particularly during the time of Ratnapāla, Indrapāla, Dharmapāla and Jayapāla, the kingdom extended to the same regions as under Bhūtivarman and Vanamāla. This is proved by their grants. Kāmarūpa power declined towards the end of the reign of Jayapāla, but it was soon revived under Vaidyadeva during the middle of the 12th century A.D., as proved by his Kamauli grant,[116] and to some extent under the family of Vallabhadeva[117] and his successors until the Sena and the Muslim invasions of the kingdom.[118]

As regards the eastern limits of the kingdom, *Ḍavāka* was obsorbed within Kāmarūpa under Kalyāṇavarman and the outlying regions were brought under subjugation by Mahendravarman.[119] As proved by the Baḍgangā epigraph of Bhūtivarman,[120] his kingdom included modern Nowgong. When Yuan Chwang visited Kāmarūpa, the kingdom of Bhāskara extended to the confines of Burma and China.[121] During the 8th century A.D. under Harṣadeva, the eastern limits must have remained the same. The Tezpur Rock epigraph of Harjjara[122] and his Hayunthal

110. See *E. I.*, XII, pp. 65f; XIX, 245f.
111. *I. A.*, IX, pp. 178f.
112. Beal, *Intro. to Life*, XXXVI-XXXVII; Watters, II, pp. 185f.
113. *Political History*, Section 2.
114. *Ibid*, Section 3.
115. *Political History*, Section 3; *J. A. S. B.*, IX, II, pp. 766f.
116. *E. I.*, II. pp. 347f.
117. *E. I.*, V, pp. 181-85.
118. See *Political History*, Section 4.
119. *Ibid*, Section 2.
120. *E. I.*, 1947, pp. 18-23.
121. Watters, II, pp. 185f.
122. *J. B. O. R. S.*, 1917, pp. 508-514.

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grant[123] prove that during the early part of the 9th century A.D. both modern Darrang and Nowgong were within the kingdom. Harjjara's relations with the tribes in the north and his supremacy over them are also proved by the latter grant. The foundation of the temporary city of Hārūppeśvara by the family of Śālastambha in Tezpur, the Tezpur grant and the Parbatiyā plates of Vanamāla, and the Nowgong grant of Balavarman[124] during the 9th-10th century A.D. also point to the extension of the kingdom to its eastern limits. The Pāla grants further indicate that the kingdom included the north-eastern limits of modern Assam, and it is significant that Purandarapāla in the early 11th century A.D. had matrimonial relations with a frontier dependency in the Sadiyā region,[125] indicating that before the foundation of petty states by Mongolian chiefs, Kāmarūpa included almost the whole of modern Assam, including Sylhet, Cāchār, Tripurā, parts of South-east Bengal and probably the Khāsi-Jaintīā Hills and Maṇipur.

The later *Purāṇas* and the *Tantras* prove that Kāmarūpa comprised lands, which on the east included the eastern limits of modern Assam and in the west extended to the *Karatoyā*, and at times beyond that river. The *Kālikā Purāṇa* (51) states that Kāmarūpa extended to the *Karatoyā* in the west and included *Maṇikūṭa*, where stood a temple of *Haya-grīva-Viṣṇu*. The same *Purāṇa* and *Tikṣa Kalpa*[126] refer to Kāmarūpa as triangular in shape, 100 *yojanas* in length and 30 *yojanas* in breadth extending from the *Karatoyā* to the *Dikkaravāsinī* in the east.[126a] The kingdom, as given in the *Yoginī Tantra* (II/I) was divided into *Ratnapīṭha*, *Bhadrāpīṭha*, *Saumārapīṭha* and *Kāmapīṭha*, bounded by the *Karatoyā* in the west and *Ḍigāru* in the east, the *Kaṇḍa* Hills in the north and the *Navālaya* in the south. The same divisions are given in the *Hara-Gaurī Saṁvāda*. The work states that *Ratnapīṭha* included the region between the *Karatoyā* and the *Svarṇakoṣa*; *Kāmapīṭha* between the *Svarṇakoṣa* and *Kapili*; *Svarṇapīṭha* between *Puṣpikā* and the *Bhairavī* and the *Saumārapīṭha* between *Bhairavī* and the *Dikrong*.[127] The *Yoginī Tantra* (I/II) describes the boundaries thus:

123. *J. A. R. S.*, I, pp. 109f.
124. *J. A. S. B.*, LXVI, I, pp. 285f.
125. Gauhāti grant, *V*. 13.
126. Gait, *Report on the Progress of Historical Research in Assam*, 1897.
126a. The boundaries in *Kālikā Purāṇa* (51/56) are :
Karatoyānadīpūrvaṁ yāvaddikkaravāsinīṁ |
Triṁśad-yojana-vistīrṇaṁ yojanaika-śatāyataṁ ||
Trikoṇaṁ kṛṣṇavarṇañca prabhūtācala-pūritaṁ |
Nadī-śata-samāyuktaṁ Kāmarūpaṁ prakīrtitaṁ ||
127. B. K. Kākati, *Mother Goddess Kāmākhyā*, p. 8.

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Napālasya Kāñcanādriṁ Brahmaputrasya saṁgamaṁ |
Karatoyāṁ samārabhya yāvad Dikkaravāsinīṁ ||
uttarasyāṁ Kañjagiriḥ Karatoyā tu paścime |
tīrthaśreṣṭhā Dikṣu nadī pūrvasyāṁ giri Kanyake ||
dakṣiṇe Brahmaputrasya Lākṣāyāḥ saṁgamāvadhiḥ |
Kāmarūpa iti khyātaḥ sarvaśāstreṣu niścitaḥ ||

The kingdom thus included the Brahmaputra valley, Bhutan, Rangpur, Koch Bihar and the adjoining lands.[128] The area of the kingdom is given in the same work thus: (I/II)—

triṁśad yojanavistīrṇaṁ dīrghena śatayojanaṁ |
Kāmarūpaṁ vijānīhi trikoṇākārāmūrttamaṁ ||
īśāne caiva kedāro vāyāvyāṁ gajaśāsanaḥ |
dakṣiṇe samgame devī Lākṣāyā Brahmaretasaḥ ||

It appears, therefore, that the kingdom was larger than most of the other kingdoms, mentioned in the *Epics* or early literature.[129] It remained so for centuries through varying fortunes, at least until the extinction of the Pāla line, and even extended beyond the traditional frontiers given in the extant literature.

9. Influence of the physical features :

A description of Assam's physical features is essential for understanding their influence on the course of the history of the land and her people. We have already noted that this land consisted of hills and plains and that the hilly regions were inhabited by the tribes. Though the land is surrounded by hills, it was through the river valleys of Assam and Burma and a few passes in the north-east and the south that these tribes entered Assam; it was, however, the valley that played a predominant part in the growth of Assam's civilisation. The mountainous character of the land was responsible for the growth of diverse cultures. The distribution of the races was largely influenced by geography. "The geological character of the mountains which form the southern side of the valley....have also to some extent affected the distribution of races. The relatively low rounded gneissic and limestone hills to the west of the Dhansiri river and Barail range, and occupied by the Garos, Khasi, Jaintia, Mikir and Kachari, are more open to India, whilst the widely different geological formation to the east belongs

128. Gait, *History of Assam*, p. 17,
129. See K. L. Barua, *E.H.K.*, p. 10.

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to the rugged Burmese mountain system and is chiefly peopled by the same tribes broadly classed as Naga."[130] "The wilder tribes inhabit especially the labyrinthine glens and ridges of the upper valleys, while the more civilised tribes are mostly restricted to the bottom of the tropical central valley fringing the great river, which connects them with the plains of India. The steep ridges and deep ravines in this area are exceptionally numerous and act as dividing barriers. On the south these ridges form a remarkable broad belt, running in almost parallel lines meridionally through Tippera, Manipur and the Kuki-Lushai land for several hundred miles between the Brahmaputra and Irrawaddy, and enclosing countless narrow valleys of great depth. The sides of several of these ridges are so cliffy as to effectively bar the progress of adjoining tribes."[131]

It was in the valley of the Brahmaputra that a high civilisation was evoloved, for the development of which the Aryan and non-Aryan elements had their part to play. The spirit of exclusiveness, imparted by the natural barriers, dividing one people from another, and the spirit of independence, especially among the tribes, are primarily due to the physical features of the land.

Assam contains mines of economic value, found mostly in the hilly regions, but distributed throughout a vast area.[132] The main geological deposits are coal, petroleum, iron, lime, salt, gold and silver found in varying proportions.[133] But, this rich mineral wealth is yet to be thoroughly brought to light. Gold, mixed with sands is found in most of the rivers; "there is scarcely a river—that does not yield more or less of this precious metal".[134] The most striking feature of the gold deposits is the universal distribution of the metal in small proportions throughout the gravel of the river beds.[135]

130. Waddell, *J. A. S. B.*, 1900, III, pp. 8-9.

131. *Ibid.*

132. *Assam District Gazetteers*, Vols. 1-X.

133. See *G. S. I.*, I, II, pp. 168, 207; XII; XVI, pp. 202f; XV, II; XX; XXI; XXXI; Hunter, *Statistical Account of Assam*, I, pp. 21, 106f, 176, 231, 299f, 380f; II, 141f, 176f, 203f, 267, 370f; Robinson, *Descriptive Account*, pp. 30-34; *Physical and Political Geography of the Province of Assam*, pp. 53f ; Wade, *Geographical Sketch of Assam*, pp. 16-23; Watt, *Commercial Products of India*, p. 874; Pemberton, *Eastern Frontiers etc.*, pp. 19f, 27f, 82f, 192f, 215f, 241f; Gurdon, *The Khāsis*, pp. 57f; M'Cosh, *J. A. S. B.*, V, 204-8; Qazim, *A. Res*, II, pp. 174-75; Playfair, *The Gāros*, 4f.

134. Robinson, *Descriptive Account of Assam*, p. 35.

135. Watt, p. 566; Hamilton, *East India Gazetteer*, p. 40.

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It is of interest that most of the temples in Assam like those at Gauhati, Hājo and Tezpur, were built on small hills and many of these hills became places of resort of many religious men for the attainment of their spiritual lore. Such is the hillock, situated at a distance of seven miles from Gauhati called *Vaśiṣṭhāśrama*, associated with *Vaśiṣṭha* in the *Kālikā Purāṇa*. Such are the temples of *Navagraha*, *Aśvakrānta*, *Umānanda*, *Kāmākhyā*, *Hājo* and the like. These Hindu and Tantrik-Buddhist shrines became the centres for the diffusion of spiritual culture. The hills and forests again contain spots of natural beauty and the land "occasionally presents a scenery comparable perhaps to the richest in the world."[136] These hills and forests have an important effect upon climate, flora, fauna and rainfall of the province.[137]

The river system is another factor of importance in the history of this State. The valley in particular is intersected by a large number of rivers. The Brahmaputra itself, flowing through the heart of the land has largely contributed to the material prosperity of the people; and contact with India has been possible by way of this river. R.C.M. Thomson rightly points out "that the valley must have been in close contact with the culture and religion of north-east India as far back as history goes. The presence of a large navigable river like the Brahmaputra must have played a big part in facilitating this intercourse".[138] Commercial intercourse was possible on all these rivers. "The number and magnitude of river in Assam probably exceed that of any other country in the world of equal extent: they are in general of a sufficient depth at all seasons to admit of a commercial intercourse in shallow boats; during the rains boats of the largest size find sufficient depth of water."[139] It is again because of this river system that this land is one of the most fertile countries in the world.[140] Not only the plains but also some of the hilly areas have been brought under cultivation, being inundated and intersected by small streams.[141] In prehistoric times some of the hilly regions may have been under water and some of the plains were higher than we find them to-day. Sadiyā for instance must have been an island, surrounded by water and Maṇipur may have been a lake and a flat valley.[142] It may

136. Robinson, *Descriptive Account of Assam*, pp. 4f.

137. A. Ali and E. Lambert, *Assam*, (Oxford Pamphlets on Indian Affairs, No. 37) p. 7; *Physical and Political Geography of Assam*, pp. 18f.

138. *Assam Valley*, p. 45.

139. W. Hamilton, *East India Gazetteer*, p. 40; Wade, *Geographical Sketch of Assam*, p. 14.

140. Hamilton, pp. 39-40.

141. Wade, *Geographical Sketch of Assam*, p. 3.

142. See *Assam District Gazetteer*, I; *G. S. I.*, XXXI, p. 4.

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be that some of the mountain barriers in the north and the east in the direction of the Mishmi and the Pātkāi Hills were not impassable during prehistoric days, and some racial elements may have made their way through them, as through Maṇipur in the south, into the valley and the adjoining hills.

This State in fine, "is a country of an almost terrifying prodigal Nature overgrown by rank and luxuriant jungle, beaten by rains—intersected by numberless rivers, pouring their torrents into the majestic Brahmaputra, and in the past racked by earthquakes and pillaged by elephant, rhinoceros, and equally savage man. It is aptly epitomised in the province's motto arva, flumina, montes-cultivation, rivers and mountains."[143] Writing on the topography and the advantages of the soil of the province, M'Cosh describes it thus: "Its climate is cold, healthy and congenial; its numerous crystal streams abound in gold dust and masses of the solid metal; its mountains are pregnant with precious stones and silver; its atmosphere is perfumed with tea, growing wild and luxuriantly; and its soil is so well adapted to all kinds of agricultural purposes that it might be converted into one continued garden of silk and cotton, of tea, coffee and sugar, over an extent of many hundred miles."[144]

But the disadvantages of the physical conditions from which the peoples have suffered are greater than the advantages; owing to the mineral deposits in the hills Assam has suffered greatly from frequent earthquakes, which have buried underground some historical monuments of the period. They are "quite as great a cause of destruction as fluvial action; there are few masonry structures which could resist a shock like that of 1897, which not only laid in ruins the towns of Shillong, Gauhati and Sylhet, but also overthrew many of the monoliths, which are so marked a feature of the Khāsi and Jaintīā Hills, and broke down most of the piers of the *Śilsāko*, an ancient stone bridge, not far from Hājo".[145]

The luxuriant vegetation of the land has been another cause of the destruction of the monuments. "The pipal (ficus religiosa) in particular is a great enemy of masonry buildings; and once a seed of this tree has germinated in the interstices of such a building, its downfall is only a question of time. . . The ruins which still survive represent only an inconsiderable fragment of the buildings that were in existence; but more will doubtless come to light when the jungle which now covers so vast an area in

143. A. Ali and E. Lambert, *Assam*, pp. 1f.
144. Quoted in *Eastern India*, III, p 696.
145. Gait, *History of Assam*, p. 21.

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Assam comes to be removed."[146] The river system and the fertility of the soil have also played their destructive role. Gait rightly points out "that in the distant past the inhabitants of the country....attained considerable power and a fair degree of civilisation....This being so, the question will doubtless be asked why so few materials of their time have come down to us. The reason is that Nature has vied with man in destroying them. The Brahmaputra valley is an alluvial country, and the impetuous, snow-fed rivers which debouch from the Himalayas find so little resistance in its friable soil that they are constantly carving out new channels and cutting away their banks; consequently no buildings erected in their neighbourhood can be expected to remain for more than a limited time".[147]

The fertility of the soil had a demoralising effect on the inhabitants of the valley; but it invited energetic people from the hills and provided an opportunity for the admixture of racial elements. This perhaps explains why, during the 12th century A.D., the Hindu dynasty was superseded and petty kingdoms were founded, mostly by tribal chiefs like those of the Maṇipuris, the Kachāris, the Chutiās, the Khāsi-Jaintiās, the Koches and others, some of which had long been in occupation of the hills. As Waddell points out, the fertility of the soil "seems always to have attracted the more powerful tribes from the mountains. On leaving the fastnesses of their hills, however, they exposed themselves more freely to attack and on the other hand their more luxurious living inevitably resulted in their degeneration and absorption by the older settlers in the plains, eventually in their turn being conquered sooner or later by a more active horde of mountaineers who again in their turn succumbed in like manner to a fresher batch of invading hillmen. The process, which seems to have been going on from time immemorial, has resulted in a considerable mixing of races in the central valley; whereas the mountain tribes appear to have retained their purity of stock to a much greater degree."[148] The varied geographical factors, therefore—the earthquakes, flood, climate, soil, etc., were at different times responsible for turning this once prosperous land into almost a wilderness.[149]

10. Conclusion :

To conclude, the physical features of Assam, dividing the hills and plains into component parts, drawn by Nature herself, have greatly contri-

146. *History of Assam*, p. 21.
147. *Ibid*, pp. 20-21.
148. Waddell, *J. A. S. B.*, 1900, III, pp. 8-9.
149. L. W. Shakespear, *History of Upper Assam*, etc., pp. 3-4.

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buted to the growth of heterogeneous cultures. The cultural link naturally goes beyond her frontiers; but unity of culture, even within the bounds of the State, seems to have been lacking. The unity of Assam in the midst of bewildering diversities lies probably in the peculiar character of her inhabitants, both in hills and the plains, a character marked by exclusiveness and independence, contributed by her geography. The spirit of patriotism and a sense of independence which of necessity united all its inhabitants in times of national calamities, along with the rugged character of her land, have been chiefly responsible for the fact that Assam, though sudjected to frequent racial inroads in the past, remained independent, at least politically, until the beginning of the 13th century A.D. Even at a later time, beginning with the third decade of the 13th century A.D., when the Āhoms began to rule, the entire land remained independent until the third decade of the 19th century A.D., when the British occupied it. The hill tribes came under their subjugation only after long fighting and many privations suffering under the British policy of ruthless suppression. While almost the whole of India was subjugated by the Muslims, their invasions of Assam, beginning with that of Bakhtiyar, met with total failure. Muslim culture, in fact, was kept at arm's length until comparatively late times, and western culture crept into her body politic only during the middle of the 19th century A.D. Nothing perhaps better explains this independent character of Assam's history than an appeal to her geography, and none can draw a true picture of the character of the Assamese and their aesthetic sense in particular, without due emphasis on the surroundings in which they live. This independent nature of her people, distinguished by a sense of patriotism, if it may be so called, is a contribution to the fundamental cultural unity of India. The location of the land in proximity to Pakistan, China, Tibet and Burma, will ever make it a factor of great importance in international politics. What we have said concerning her geography will be obvious on a treatment of the origin of the diverse peoples that contributed to the growth of her civilisation.

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CHAPTER IV

PREHISTORY AND RACIAL ELEMENTS

SECTION I

PREHISTORIC FINDS AND OTHER REMAINS

The subject of prehistory and racial elements in Assam is still a little investigated field of study; but it has an important bearing on the composite culture of the Assamese, which we have discussed in the body of the work. Our study of the subject will be from the standpoint of archaeology, ethnography and other allied factors.

1. Caves and fortifications :

We have no definite evidence that prehistoric man in Assam lived in caves. There are, however, caves in Chera, Syndai (Khāsi-Jaintīā Hills),[1] in Mikir Hills[2] and North Cāchār;[3] traces of rudimentary paintings and carvings have also been noticed.[4] Speaking of the cave in Cāchār, Mills records a tradition that the remnants of a prehistoric Negrito race were blocked into a cave near Hāflong by a Kachāri king.[5] Mrs. Ursula Graham Bower writes that all through the Barail area in Cāchār are the remains of caves, fortifications and villages of a vanished people called *Siemi*. The Zemi tradition connects with these people some curious beads, which are believed to have been buried in their graves. She also recalls the tradition that a Kachāri king was responsible for their death in a cave.[6] But nobody knows whether such people actually lived, and the tradition is not supported by skulls or other remains from such caves. Such traditions are as unreliable as the stories of most of the tribes, which trace their origin from caves or rocks; the theory of Perry that such myths are to be associated with the use of stone and the internment of the dead,[7] may or may not be correct. It may be that such stories have a bearing on the remote origin of the peoples who tell them.

1. Hutton, *J. A. S. B.*, XXII (NS), p. 341.
2. R. M. Nath, *J. A. R. S.*, VII, pp. 19-23.
3. Ursula Graham Bower, *Naga Path*, pp. 121-129.
4. J. P. Mills, *J. A. R. S.*, I, pp. 3-6.
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Naga Path*, pp. 121-29.
7. *Megalithic Culture of Indonesia*, pp. 70f, 79f.

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2. Neoliths :

Our knowledge of the earlier neoliths is meagre. Those that belong to the later Neolithic period, were probably made by the speakers of the Mon-Khmer speech beginning with 2500 B.C. or a little earlier. J.P. Mills points out that the earliest inhabitants of Assam, the Negritos, "have left behind them an immense number of stone celts, probably blades of digging sticks. These are found on or just below the surface and differ in a most interesting way in different areas of the province."[8]

(a) *Areas of distribution and various types :* We have noticed a few specimens, preserved in the Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford. Stone celts, so far discovered from this land, reveal a variety of types, mainly three: the first is long, narrow and triangular; the second, more or less rectangular, and the third is the shouldered type. The first type may be compared with celts, found in dolmen graves of Southern India; the second one, which is rare, was probably hafted between two layers of wood, lashed together like the implements of the Polynesians; the third type is derived from the Mon-Khmer-Irrawaddy type. The adze type was found in the Gangetic plains and it is suggested that this was brought probably by the emigrants from the east.[9]

Of the shouldered specimens, two types are found in Viśvanāth (Darrang) and Kanārpārā (Cāchār). Their shapes resemble the Burmese type, as described by Theobald,[10] who noticed also two adzes of the same type from Singbhum.[11] To judge from the geological formations of the Cāchār[12] and the Mikir Hills lying close to the find at Viśvanāth,[13] the specimens from Assam were locally made. The rock materials of the specimens are also similar to the Khāsi and Sylhet trap. The parallel finds suggest a link between the Khāsis, people of Pegu (Burma) and the Muṇḍas.[14] J. Cockburn noticed two celts in the Khāsi Hills, resembling the small jade specimens of the shouldered types from Yunnan. It is suggested that these may have been used with handles for agricultural

8. *J. A. R. S.*, I, pp. 3-6; Peal, *J. A. S. B.*, LXIII III, p. 16.
9. J. H. Hutton, *Man in India*, VIII, pp. 228f.
10. *M. G. S. I.*, X, II, pp. 167-71.
11. *P. A. S. B.*, 1875, pp. 118-122; *Phayre, J. A. S. B.*, XLII I, pp. 23-57; Ball, *P. A. S. B.*, 1876, p. 3.
12. La Touche, *R. G. S. I.*, XVI, IV, pp. 202-203.
13. Smith, *M. G. S. I.*, XXVIII, pp. 71-95.
14. H. C. Dasgupta, *J.A.S.B.*, IX (N.S.), pp. 291-93.

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purposes and for flaying animals. Similar implements, fixed on bamboo handles, were used in Arakan.[15]

Throughout the area of the monoliths in North Cāchār, stone adzes are found. In some cases they resemble iron hoes, still used by Yimtsungrr Nagās and the Khāsis. One specimen is the shouldered type, and another resembles an axe rather than an adze, flat and triangular, differing much from the prevailing type of stone implement found in the Nagā Hills, which is thick and roughly shouldered, but not so highly polished as that from Cāchār.[16]

Two more specimens were found in the Nagā Hills, with reference to which J.H. Hutton observes that the commonest type is the roughly shouldered triangular one, of which the cutting edge is polished. It was probably fitted into a wooden handle ; the less common type is longer in proportion to its width, having no shoulders. Both the types may have been used as hoes and axes. One specimen from Bapugwema is shouldered and is made of a hard reddish stone. The second type from Kamahu is smaller with cutting edges on both sides, made of white stone with pale green veins. The former type is associated with the Mon-Khmers of Malaya, Chotanagpur and the Irrawaddy valley. This indicates that some branch of the Mon-Khmers may have passed through the Nagā Hills before it had learnt the use of iron.[17]

In discussing the Chotanagpur prehistoric burials and the copper celts of the shouldered type found there, which may be associated with the shouldered stones and iron hoes, used by the Khāsi-Nagās like the Muṇḍas, Hutton points out that their use is not-coextensive with the Muṇḍa speaking areas and suggests that it is either an intrusion from Oceania or a development which started in Eastern India and then spread to the Isles. He mentions also the Irrawaddy shouldered type, as found in the Nagā Hills, in Bapugwema, Waichang and Kobak and Bolasan in North Cāchār, where have been found a number of stone urns, containing ashes of the dead, the forerunners of the Khāsi stone celts and clan burials, as well as a number of stone adzes and axes. The axes are triangular, flat and polished, but the adzes or hoes have the appearance of being worked in imitation of metal originals, like the existing Khāsi and Nagā hoes. Hutton concludes that the shape of the shouldered stone

15. *J.A.S.B.*, 1879, II, pp. 133f; *P.A.S.B.*, 1871, p. 83.

16. Mills and Hutton, *J.P.A.S.B.*, XXV (N.S.), pp. 295-96.

17. Hutton, '*Two celts from the Naga Hills*', *Man*, 1924, pp. 20-22; also Peal, *J.A.S.B.*, LXV, III, p. 20.

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adzes may have been derived from metal. He further adds that if the use of copper is later than that of stone in this region, the shouldered stone celt may be an intrusion from Indonesia, but if copper was the original material for the manufacture of tools, the stone substitute may have reached Oceania from the west.[18] In our opinion the earlier evolution of the stone celt appears probable; but perhaps neither this nor the use of copper is due to the intrusion of a culture either from the east or the west, since both may have been evolved independently in different centres. We do not, however, dispute Hutton's conclusion on the possibility of closer links between the Mon-Khmer-Khasi-Muṇḍa and Indonesian cultures.

G. Hesseldin noticed one stone adze in the Nagā Hills, which is slightly shouldered. It is one of the rarest types, and is made of fossilised wood.[19] Henry Balfour thinks that some of the celts from the same area were used as axes and hoes; one specimen with trimmed square shoulders and an uniform flat surface was noticed.[20] In the Nagā Hills, though some of these implements are now regarded as thunderbolts, associated with the fertility of crops, and are used as charms, they are still employed for pounding rice and spices and used as hammers, which are similar to those from the Philippines.[21]

Of the other specimens, six grooved hammers from Viśvanāth, Assam are very important. They are "perhaps the rarest of the numerous neolithic stone implements recorded from Eastern Asia".[22] Some specimens of a less perfect form were discovered by J. Cockburn from the North-Western Provinces.[23] Similar types are also reported from Banda district, and Foote noticed others from Bellary and Baroda.[24] But the implements from Assam belong to a different type. As Brown points out, such hammers have not been discovered in Burma, Malaya, Borneo, Indo-China or Yunnan. Only a single specimen is recorded from China, described by B. Laufer,[25] and another in a shell-mound on the southern shores of Sakhalin by Jeguina.[26] It appears from the find-spots of similar types that the hammer stones of Assam have some connection with those

18. *C.R.I.*, 1931, I, I, pp. 357f.
19. '*A Naga Hills Celt*,' *J.A.S.B.*, (N.S.), XXII, p. 133.
20. *Man, February*, 1924.
21. Hutton, *J.R.A.I.*, LVI, p. 71.
22. Coggin Brown, *J.A.S.B.*, X (N.S.), pp. 107f.
23. *J.A.S.B.*, 1883, pp. 221-230.
24. *J.A.S.B.*,X, (N.S.), pp. 107f.
25. '*Jade, A Study in Archaeology and Religion*', *Field Museum of Natural History Publications*, 154, X, 1912, p. 50.
26. *J.A.S.* (Tokyo), XXI, (No. 247).

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from Southern India and the North-Western Provinces. It is worth mentioning that stone celts from Vellore in North Arcot, closely similar to those of the Nagā Hills, have been noticed; this indicates, as rightly believed by Hutton, that the Nagās contain elements which migrated from Southern India.[27]

Some axe type celts were noticed by Lt. Barron in the Nagā Hills; the local people believe them to have fallen from the sky.[28] Peal noticed some celts in the same area, even now used as hammers.[29] R. D. Banerji, noticed an adze in a Padam Ābar village, which, on examination, was found to be made of the Ābar trap of the type, described by Coggin Brown.[30] The local people still believe that it fell from the sky and possesses charms.[31]

Besides these, there are a large number of stray finds from different parts of the State, indicating the extent of the neolithic culture in the area. J. D. Anderson mentions a celt from Sadiya, and Godwin-Austen describes another from the Khāsi Hills.[32] J. Lubbock refers to other specimens, particularly of jade, in Upper Assam, which are supposed to have fallen from the sky and to possess magical virtues.[33] H. B. Medlicott refers to a stone hatchet from Dibrugarh,[34] and Peal mentions a celt, said to have been dug out from a tea factory.[35] E. H. Steel refers to a few neoliths, made of jade, found in the village of the Namsang Nagās.[36] Some tribes, like the Āos,[37] Western Rengmās,[38] Semās,[39] Lhotas,[40] some people of Maṇipur[41] have stone celts, associated with fertility and good fortune. It may be mentioned that there is an universal belief, which may be associated

27. Hutton, *Man*, 1926, pp. 222-24.
28. *J.R.A.I.*, I, pp. LXII-LXIII.
29. *J.R.A.I.*, III, p. 479.
30. *R.G.S.I.*, XVII, p. 244.
31. *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1925-6, p. 107.
32. *P.A.S.B.*, 1875, p. 158. Dr. H. Bareh showed me an axe type neolith from the Khāsi Hills, and told me that such celts are found in abundance in many places of K. & J. Hills.
33. *The Stone Age*, 1867, p. 822.
34. *P.A.S.B.*, 1875, p. 159.
35. *P.A.S.B.*, 1872, pp. 135-38.
36. *P.A.S.B.*, 1870, pp. 267-68
37. Smith, *The Ao Naga Tribe*, p. 88.
38. Mills, *A.C.R.*, 1931, III, App. B, pp. VI-VII.
39. Hutton, *The Sema Nagas*, p. 257.
40. Mills, *The Lhota Nagas*, pp. 166f.
41. Shakespeare, *F.L.* XXIV, pp. 453-54.

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with fetishism,[42] that stone celts are thunderbolts and possess charms. This wide-spread belief of these primitive people confirms our view that some of these celts, handed down from generation to generation as heir-looms, belong to a past age. The practice of using stone and copper celts like spearheads and other weapons as currency or a medium of exchange is reported from the Nagā Hills. The Āos, for instance, formerly used a type of currency, called '*Chabili*', a hereditary property of the family, associated with magic. These were made of iron in imitation of long '*daos*'.[43]

(*b*) *Their authors and the importance of its study:* It appers that only a few remains have so far been discovered. It would be a mistake to attribute all the existing neoliths or stone celts to the Khāsi-Syntengs alone, in view of the vast are in which these have been found. The areas include the Khāsi-Hills, Darrang, Cāchār, the Nagā Hills, Maṇipur and Upper Assam. But, to whatever people the stone celts belonged, whether the Mon-Khmers of the Austric stock or others, they show definite links not only with Burma, Malaya and the Oceanic world but also with Central and Southern India and with the Gangetic valley and the west. The wide distribution of the celts points only to the once wide-spread neolithic culture in the land. The cult of fertility and magic, associated with most of them, and which we find working throughout the ancient period, perhaps laid to a certain extent the foundation of Assamese religious life, particularly of Tāntrikism.[44]

3. Pottery :

We are not certain whether any neolithic pottery has so far been discovered in the land. A few ancient specimens, consisting of pots, plates and jars of various descriptions, are now preserved in the Gauhati Museum, Assam.[45] It is suggested that these specimens "exhibit the ceramic art of a bygone age, possibly pre-Aryan".[46] In the opinion of K. N. Dikshit, these are older than specimens of ancient pottery so far discovered in other parts of India.[47] It is not possible at the present state of our knowledge to attribute them to a definite period, except that, some of them may belong to an early period. The quality of the finds

42. Hutton, *The Angami Nagas*, pp.403f.
43. *The Ao Nagas*, p. 102; S. C. Goswami, *J.A.R.S.*, VII, pp. 87f.
44. See Chap. VI, Section 4.
45. S. Kataki, *I.H.Q.*, VI, pp. 364f.
46. K. L. Barua, *E.H.K.*, p. 184.
47. See *E.H.K.*, p. 184.

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also indicates that the authors probably flourished in a period of fairly advanced state of culture, when the people knew the art of making pottery and cooking with such utensils.

4. Megaliths :

Like the neoliths, our difficulty in the treatment of the megaliths of Assam lies in chronology, which has not yet been determined with accuracy by any writer.[48] The difficulty has been increased by the fact that the megalithic culture of Assam not only belongs to a period of undated history but also to a living present, particularly among the Khāsis and some Nagās.[49] As J. P. Mills rightly remarks : "An archaeological characteristic of Assam of world wide fame is its wealth of megaliths. Indeed it is one of the few places in the world where monuments of this type are still created. Some of the old ones are of great age and interest...Both on megaliths and rocks in Assam are often found most interesting drawings".[50]

(*a*) *Origin and link* : The origin of the megalithic culture as a whole is disputed. A. L. Lewis suggests its diverse origin in different centres.[51] Fergusson believes that it was diffused from a common centre.[52] Elliot Smith[53] is in favour of tracing its origin to the prehistroric tombs of Egypt. W. H. R. Rivers associates it with the use of metal and with a class of people who carried their ideas to different centres by sea.[54] In the opinion of Quaritch Wales, an Egyptian wave travelled to South-east Asia, bringing with it the solar cult, the use of beads, etc.[55] H. Peake disagrees with these writers on the Egyptian origin of megaliths.[56] The striking similarities between the Egyptian and Indian megaliths, connected also with those of Babylonia and Assyria, have been pointed out by some writers.[57] P. Mitra believes that a strong wave came to Southern India

48. See Heine Geldern, *Anthropos*, XXIII, pp. 275-315, where an attempt has been made for fixing dates.

49. Haimendorf, *Naked Nagas*, pp. 21f; Hutton *Man in India*, VIII, pp. 228-32.

50. *J.A.R.S.*, I, pp. 3-6.

51. *J.R.A.I.*, 1910, p. 342.

52. *Rough Stone Monuments of all Countries*, pp. 45-46.

53. *Evolution of Rock-cut Tombs and the Dolmen*, Essays Presented to Ridgeway, 1913, p. 544.

54. *The Contact of Peoples*, Essays Presented to Ridgeway, 1913, p. 491.

55. *The Making of Greater India*, pp. 65f.

56. *Man*, 1916, pp. 117f.

57. Walhouse, *I.A.*, II, pp. 278f; *A.R.A.S.I.* (Madras circle), 1913-14; P. Mitra, *P.A.S.B.*, (N.S.), XVII, pp. CCXLVII.

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by sea and then travelled to the east and north-east and that it had contact with Egypt and other countries.[58] Walter Ribon holds that this culture came to India by way of Palestine and Perisa in the early iron age; it branched off in Northern India into two waves, one moving to the south and the other to the east. He is, therefore, in favour of the view that the megaliths and the *Asura* tombs of the Muṇḍas had a western origin and that the culture spread to Assam during the iron age.[59] Heine Geldern traces the origin of megaliths to the Mediterranean region and mentions a number of essentials, such as the planting of millet and rice, the use of the knife for harvest, rice beer, the rearing of pig, buffalo and cattle for sacrifices, use of pottery, the manufacture of cloth, pile-dwellings, head-hunting, megaliths as memorials, feasts, etc.[60] Most of these features are found among those Assam tribes which erect megaliths.

While a wave of megalithic culture might have entered Assam from the west, marked affinities of the megaliths of the Assam tribes, whether Mon-Khmer or Tibeto-Burman, with those of South-east Asia and the Pacific world, suggest a migration of another wave from the latter regions. Hutton, speaking of the Ḍimāpur monoliths, has rightly pointed out that these are phallic in origin, and have parallels in Malaya and also to a certain extent in Chotanagpur. The monuments of the same place and Jāmugurī have been linked up with those of the Nagās. He does not find any connection between the monoliths from Assam with those of Egypt except in a few representation of heavenly bodies. The dolmens, he suggests, may have been introduced from Southern India. He further suggests that they may have originated in the Pacific area. He concludes that the origin of megaliths "is of course uncertain, but it appears that it is to be mainly imputed to the Mon-Khmer intrusion from the east".[61]

The practice of disposal in stone-cists, whether of the skull alone, as for instance, among the Konyaks, or of the bones and ashes as by the Khāsis, provides an important link between the tribes of Assam and those of Burma and South-east Asia on one side, and the Muṇḍas and those of Southern India on the other. While this practice may have been followed for a long time past, only a few specimens of stone-cists, containing remains of the dead have been found. In the Jaintīā Hills at Laitlyng-

58. *Prehistoric India*, pp. 335-38.

59. See Haimendorf, *J.R.A.S.B.*, IX, pp. 149f.

60. 'Prehistoric Research in the Netherland Indies,' *Science and Scientist in the Netherland Indies*, New York, 1945.

61. *Man in India*, VIII, pp. 228f.

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kote, a dolmen with bones of the dead was found with a menhir in pairs.[62] Calvert found in a monolith from Dereborā, North Cāchār a few remains of bones of a skull, which Arthur Keith took to be that of a man.[63] Godwin-Austen reports that in a stone-cist from the south of Jowāi, remains of bones, bangles and wristlets of brass were found.[64] The stray finds confirm our belief that some of the megaliths were associated with the disposal of the dead, parallel instances of which are found not only in the dolmens of Southern India and those of the Muṇḍas but also in Burma, Borneo and other islands in the Pacific. In Kelabit in Borneo., the megaliths are associated with burial urns and tanks as among the Khāsis, and some Nagās; the stone urns have cavities like those of the monoliths at Ḍimāpur and North Cāchār. H. C. Raven describes some stone jars from Central Celebes, similar to those of North Indo China, noticed by T. Donald Cartar.[65] The jars are similar to the stone-cists of the Konyaks and earthen pots of the Khāsi-Syntengs. Jars containing bones were found by the side of menhirs and dolmens in the Kelabit country in Borneo.[66] T. Ko mentions a stone funeral urn from Prome.[67] Chas Duroiselle mentions two others with *Pyu* characters. Near the outskirts of Peikthanomyo and within the limits of Pyndaik at Hmawza were noticed six stone basins. The same authority noticed a number of funeral earthen pots, containing bones from Kyunbingon near the Bawbawgyi pagoda and at Tebingon near the same place, and also a stone urn from the Bawbawgyi pagoda at Hmawza;[68] some more stone urns with human remains were found with *Pyu* characters from Hmawza,[69] and four large ones from the same place.[70] It appears that stone urns in Burma were used for kings and earthen pots for ordinary persons. The burial practices of Prome have close parallel with the Khāsi-Synteng and Konyak practices, and provide important evidence of their common ethnic origin. In fact, the use of stone for graves or memorials is common to both Mon-Khmer and Tibeto-Burman culture in Assam, and has a wonderful similarity with the same

62. Hutton, *J.A.S.B.*, (N.S.) XXII, p. 335.

63. Mills and Hutton, *J.P.A.S.B.*, XXV, (NS), pp. 285f.

64. *J.R.A.I.*, I, pp. 122f.

65. The Stone Image and Vats of Central Celebes, *Natural History*, I, 1926, pp. 272-82; Huge Stone Jars and Vats of Central Celebes similar to those of N. Indo-China, *American Anthropologist*, XXXV, (N.S.) p. 545.

66. E. Banks, Some Megalithic Remains from Kelabit Country in Sarawak with Some Notes on Kelabits themselves, *Sarawak Museum Journal*, IV, 4, (N. 15.) pp. 411-37.

67. *A.S.I.*, 1910-11, p. 93.

68. *Ibid*, 1911-12, pp. 147-49; *A.S.B.* 1912, II, pp. 11-13.

69. *A.S.B*, 1913, II, pp. 13-15.

70. *A.S.B.*, 1920, II, pp. 13-14.

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practice by the people of Indonesia, Philippines, Formosa, Luzon, Nias and other islands in the Pacific.[71]

That the megaliths of Assam, connected with the South-east Asiatic type have marked affinities with those of Orissa than with those of Central and Southern India, may be inferred from the similarities in the method of their erection and their association with elaborate rituals. C. V. F. Haimendorf, for instance, dilating on the problem of origin, points out "that the megalithic culture of the South-east Asiatic type which still flourishes among Gadabas and Bondos and Bastar Gonds reached Peninsular India in late neolithic times from an eastern direction. Its centre of diffusion ......though not necessarily origin ......lay somewhere in Eastern Assam, North Burma or South-west China and a far stronger branch stretched southwards and south-westwards into Indonesia and Oceania".[72] The elements of rituals, as found in Assam, Orissa, Nias, Luzon and other places, indicate that these "must have been developed before the beginning of the great Austronesian migration and the movement of the Austro-Asiatic races westwards into Peninsular India."[73] In the opinion of Haimendorf, therefore, the megaliths of the Austro-Asiatic type are not connected with the Dravidian one, and that the dolmens of Southern India appear to be older than the early iron age, while the migration of the Austronesians may have taken place in neolithic times and the megaliths of the South-east Asiatic type may have been developed before this migration. The megalithic tombs of Southern India again are different from those of the Hos and the Muṇḍas, which may be connected with the Mediterranean world. While the Austronesians are believed to have carried their culture into the Pacific, the area colonised by the Austro-Asiatics was limited and did not probably extend south of the Godavari. The prehistoric monuments of the Deccan like those of Western India had probably a different origin.[74] Walter Ribon, however, suggests possible links of the two cultures from the east and the west and the spread of the same from the south and the west of India to the east. But Haimendorf holds that while the Muṇḍas got it from the west , that the iron workers of Chotanagpur might have got the idea from the east, may be put as an alternative suggestion.[75]

71. Perry, *Megalithic Culture of Indonesia*, pp. 20-31.
72. *Man in India*, XXV, p. 81.
73. Haimendorf, *J.R.A.S.B.*, IX, p. 177.
74. Haimendorf, *J.R.A.S.B.*, IX, pp. 149-78.
75. *Ibid;* also M.C. Burkitt, Fresh Light on the Stone Ages in South-east India, *Antiquity*, IV, 1930, p. 338.

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It is possible that some influence of the megalithic culture entered the Khāsi Hills and led the Khāsis to practise the periodical collection of the remains of the dead which were deposited in stone-cists; but such repositories have not been found among the Muṇḍas. If the migration was from west to east, it may have taken place after that culture migrated from the east to the west. It may also be suggested that the practice of the Khāsis originated with them without outside influence. But the link between the western megalithic culture and those of Mid-India and South-east Asia is suspected owing to the existence of megaliths in Tibet.[76]

(b) *Essential features of the Assam megaliths—comparison with those of other countries :* The essential features of the megalithic culture of the South-east Asiatic type are confined to people with well-developed agriculture, the use of the hoe, shifting cultivation, terraced cultivation, and cattle rearing both for food and sacrifice. These features are common in the Pacific area from neolithic times, and are associated with the existence of the shouldered celts. While only a few such celts have been found in Southern India, various specimens have been discovered in Assam, as in Burma and Central India. The shouldered type is associated with the Austro-Asiatic people and the quadrangular one with the Austronesians. It appears that the megaliths of the South-east Asiatic type, mainly associated with the Mon-Khmers, had their origin and were diffused from that area and may have exerted a limited influence in Southern India. The fact that significant cultural and ritualistic parallels exist between the tribes of Assam, Orissa and Chotanagpur, is suggestive of a close "connection between all these manifestations of megalithic culture,"[77] as with the Oceanic world, fundamentally real and alive even today.[78] What distinguishes this culture in Assam as in South-east Asia is its intimate connection with the living faith of the people.[79]

An important link between the Assam tribes and the Muṇḍas has been shown by scholars like J. H. Hutton, who makes particular reference to the monoliths from Ḍimāpur and Jāmugurī. The Nagā practice of the erection of megaliths has been connected with

76. Haimendorf, *Man in India*, XXV, pp. 81f; G.N. Roerich, *J.R.A.S.B.*, VIII, 1942.

77. Haimendorf, *Man in India*, XXV, pp. 79f.

78. Quaritch Wales, *The Making of Greater India*, pp. 48f.

79. Haimendorf, *Man in India*, XXV, pp. 74f. *Research and Progress*, V, pp. 95-100.

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the former inhabitants of the valley of the Dhanśiri and the Dayāng. The bulbous-headed carved stones of the Muṇḍas may be taken as prototypes of the cylindrical specimens from these regions. As with the Khāsi megaliths, those of the Muṇḍas are monumental, but there appears to be no connection between the stones set up as memorials of the dead and those erected to assist the fertilisation of Nature, as had been the case with those of Ḍimāpur and Jāmuguri. If, however, the souls of the dead are sometimes identified with the reproductive powers of Nature, the phallic stones of the Dhanśiri and the Nagā Hills, may have belonged to the same culture as the monuments of the Khāsi-Muṇḍas.[80] The Wakching practice of the erection of megaliths for the dead is based on the idea that the soul is located in the phallic menhir for fertilisation. The same idea is explained by the monoliths of Jāmugurī ; all these associations again indicate a link between the tribes of Assam and those of the islands of the Pacific.[81]

A far closer link between the Assam tribes and those of Orissa may be gathered from their common megalithic practices. The use of stone and forked wooden posts, erected with the same rituals, has been common in Assam, Indo-China, Oceania and certain parts of Africa.[82] While the use of wooden posts is found among the Assam tribes and Gonds, the Gadabas and the Bondos have not been used to it. It appears that the Y shaped posts show a connection between the Nagās and the Gonds. The Orissa tribes erect menhirs by the roadside like the Nagās, and the belief that the soul is attached to a stone is common among the Gonds and the Orissa tribes;[83] but there are no feasts of merit among the Gonds, the tribes of Orissa and Southern India. This is a main point of difference between megalithic culture there and in Further India.[84] Most of the present practices of the Assam tribes have, however, close parallels with those of the Orissa tribes, and of the people of South-east Asia;[85] a highly developed megalith culture is found among the Āngāmi Nagās. This indicates that two cultural streams entered the Nagā Hills, the latter of which is represented by that of the Āngāmis.[86] In any case, the various methods of

80. *J.R.A.I.*, LIII, pp. 151f.
81. Hutton, *Man*, 1927, pp. 61-64.
82. Haimendorf, *Megalithic Culture of Assam*. (App. to Schnitger's *Forgotten Kingdoms in Sumatra*), pp. 218f; *Man in India*, XXV, pp. 75f; *G.J*, CXI, pp. 210f.
83. *Man in India*, XXV, pp. 76f.
84. *Ibid.*
85. *G.J.*, CXI, pp. 210f.
86. Haimendorf, *J.R.A.S.B.*, IX, pp. 149f.

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the erection of megaliths in Assam have remarkable affinities with those of Orissa; and Hutton is probably right in suggesting that certain primitive tribes of both had a common ethnic or cultural origin.[87]

In spite of these similarities between the Assam tribes and those of Orissa and of other parts of India, the various methods of erection and the association of megaliths with graves, ancestor worship, soul matter, fertility, social prestige, head-hunting, etc., among the former show far closer affinities with those of the people of the Oceanic world, Madagascar and even Africa.[88] The parallel is not only indicative of the fact that a strong megalithic cultural stream entered Assam from the Oceanic world but also that their authors had a common ethnic origin.[89]

It is significant again that the megaliths of Assam, particularly of the Khāsi-Syntengs[90] show close similarities with those of Stonehenge and of other places in the British Isles, Western Asia, the Mediterranean world and Europe. As P. R. T. Gurdon writes, "It is remarkable that the shape of the stones should be so similar to those which exist in England, Brittany, and I believe also in Denmark and Scandinavia."[91]

We need not go into a discussion of the different methods of erection of megaliths, as practised by most tribes; but some of their present practices, such as those of the Nagās, give us an idea of the remnants of a once vigorous megalithic culture. Some of the ancient remains show various formations like dissoliths, (menhirs and dolmens in pairs), arranged in rows, circles, etc., most of which were associated with tanks. In the opinion of Heine Geldern, the older megaliths consisted of menhirs and dolmens, which were not used as graves, stone-cists, terraces, pyramids, various types of tombs and others, associated with tanks.[92] The more recent ones consist of stone-cist graves, dolmen graves, menhirs, stone vats, figures of ancestors, and show evidence of the use of pottery and metal.[93] The older megaliths are found ornamented with geometrical

87. *Caste in India*, pp. 24-25; Haimendorf, *J.R.A.S.B.*, IX, pp. 149f.

88. Hutton, *J.R.A.I.*, LVI, pp. 71f. ; *Man in India*, XII, pp. 1-18.

89. Hutton, *Man in India*, IV, pp. 1-13; E. Evans, *Sarawak Museum Journal*, IV, 4, pp. 411-37.

90. C. B. Clarke, *J.R.A.I.*, III, pp. 481-93; Fergusson, *Rude Stone Monuments*, pp. 461f; H. Walter, *A.Res*, XVII, pp. 492-512; *Asiatic Journal*, XXVII, pp. 321-23; Gurdon, *J.A.S.B.*, 1904, III, pp.64f; *The Khasis*, pp. 144f; H. Yule, *J.A.S.B.*, XIII, II, pp. 617-19; Steel, *Trans. of Ethonological Society of London*, VII, (N.S.) pp. 305-312; David Roy *Man in India*, XVII, p. 73; L. S. Anderson, *J.A.S.B.*, XX, (N.S.) pp. 149f; Hariblah, *A.C.R.*, 1931, III, I.

91. *J.A.S.B.*, 1904, III, pp. 64-66.

92. See Prehistoric Researches in the Netherland Indies, *Science and Scientist in the Netherland Indies*, 1945, p. 151.

93. See Quaritch Wales, *The Making of Greater India*, p. 69.

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designs, rosettes, heavenly bodies, carved cattle heads, women's breasts, pigs' heads, etc;[94] the more recent megalithic art include circles, animals, birds, creepers, and the like.[95] Some of the ancient remains of Assam prove the existence of both the older and the younger megaliths.

Whatever the various methods of erection, it is indeed difficult to study the question of racial elements on the basis of megaliths alone; the weight of evidence, however, points to the fact that while most of the tribes migrated from South-east Asia and the Oceanic world, bringing with them the cult of megaliths and the use of metal at a later time, as in the Khāsi Hills, [96] it seems probable that other waves entered Assam from India. The question of the origin and migration of the megalithic culture will also be clear from a discussion of some ancient remains.

5. Some ancient remains :

(a) *Khāsi-Jaintīā Hills :* So wide-spread are the megaliths in the Khāsi-Jaintīa Hills, mixed up with innumerable recent erections, that it is difficult to point to a particular specimen as belonging to the past. The Khāsi-Syntengs being the earliest users of stone, it is possible that some ancient remains still survive. Gurdon surmises that they have learnt its use from some prehistoric race who already occupied their present habitat;[97] but it is also likely that they brought with them the knowledge of the use of stone.

Some of the probable ancient sites are Cherā, Jowāi, Nārtiāng and Laitlyngkote, where megaliths are found in pairs, menhirs and dolmens, circles and in other forms. Most of them are memorials, and only a few of the dolmens are associated with human remains.[98] At Laitlyngkote, a dolmen with bones of the dead was found by the side of a menhir. Near Jawalaija, a stone circle like an Āngāmi '*tehuba*' with a hole at the top of the cromlech was noticed. Between Nārtiāng and Nārtiāng bazar several tanks, remains of ramparts and dissoliths lie scattered. "The bazar itself is a wonderful collection of menhirs and dolmens."[99]

94. *Prehistoric Researches, etc.*, p. 151.

95. *Ibid; The Making of Greater India*, p. 61; Haimendorf, App. to Schnitger's *Forgotten Kingdom in Sumatra*, pp. 215f.

96. See Perry, *Megalithic Culture of Indonesia*, pp. 92f.

97. *J.A.S.B.*, 1904, III, pp. 64f.

98. Godwin-Austen *J.R.A.I.*, I, pp. 122-36; *Report on the British Association for the Advancement of Science, Trans.*, 1874 p.153; Hooker, *Himalayan Journal*, II, XXIX.

99. Hutton, *J.A.S.B.*, XXII, pp. 333-36.

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In a rock in Khimosniang between Jowāi and Jārain there is the carving of an elephant, and close to it is seen an earthenwork; there is also a burial cist, lying at some distance from it, backed by a menhir. Further on the open hills are a number of menhirs and dolmens and near the locality is a tank with a dissolith and beyond it lies a circular cairn. There is another dissolith in front of it, which forms part of a circle. Another big menhir like those of the Kacha and Konyak Nagā erections was noticed in the locality. In Maput lies a megalithic bridge and another is seen over the Umnyakneh river between Jārain and Syndai. There are remains of a megalithic bridge on the river Āmsāri near Jaintīāpur; similar remains are found on the river Ambunon. Just beyond the bridge are a number of dolmens. In Jaintīāpur there is a broken pillar and outside the temple ruins are menhirs and dolmens. The whole of the Jaintīā hills show traces of a once wide-spread megalithic culture.[100] The remains of Khāsi-Jaintīā Hills perhaps belong to different periods of history, and only the spade of an archaeologist will help us to determine their age and throw new light on their links with those of other tribes.

(b) *North Cāchār:* As with the Khāsi-Synteng monuments, so with those from North Cāchār, we are faced with the same chronological difficulty; only a few of the remains can be attributed to an early period. Some of the sites are Nunglo, Bolāsān, Dereborā, Kobāk and Kārtong.[101] Mills and Hutton have made an important study of some of them.[102]

The remains may be divided into male and female types; the former group constitute the larger ones from Kārtong and a small group between Kārtong and Kobāk. The monoliths from the former have the shape of truncated cone, the flat base of which is circular; they have cavities. The second group lies between Kārtong and Kobāk. The specimens from Kobāk belong to the male type, which are not pearshaped, the top of the stones being conical rather than bulbous. One stone about 7 feet in length is cylindrical in shape, in contrast to the pear-shaped ones from Bolāsān. Most of the Kobāk stones contain carvings of bands, pigs, human heads, resembling those done by the Nagās. Some stones from Bolāsān are similar to those from Kobāk except in their carvings; others are pear-shaped and bulbous, though not so flat across the tops, but convex from the greatest circumference to the apex, with a cavity at the top. They are arranged in lines like the wooden posts of the Āos, in larger

100. Hutton, *J.A.S.B.*, XXII, pp. 333-36.

101. See K. N. Dikshit, *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1929-30, pp. 45-46; Godwin-Austen *J.R.A.I.* I, pp. 122f; Ursula Graham Bower, *Naga Path*, pp. 122f.

102. *J.P.A.S.B.*, XXV (N.S.), pp. 285-300.

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and smaller rows. One of the larger ones measures 6 feet in height, having a cavity of 10 inches in diameter and 2 feet deep ; some contain carvings of elephants, dog teeth patterns, orbs, deer, vessels, rainbows, etc. The Dereborā stones are considered by Mills and Hutton to be the most ancient of the male types and different from those of Kobāk and Bolāsān in having larger cavities at the top.[103] These are placed in parallel lines along with a larger monolith lying at a distance; one stone measures 16 feet in circumference, another 17 feet 8 inches with a diameter of 1 foot 8 inches across its opening. One stone measures 23 feet 7 inches round its greatest circumference and its cavity is 5 feet 3 inches in depth. In the same locality there are remains of tanks and a dissolith.

At Malangha, there are pear-shaped stones and tanks in pairs as at Bolāsān and near Kārtong are to be seen more twin tanks. A knoll shows remains of a circle of stones with a menhir outside it. Between Malangha and Kārtong there are several menhirs, flat on one side and round on the other, resembling a cricket bat. Some of them bear carvings of elephants and female organs. There are tanks all round the areas. Between Kārtong and Waichāng there are rows of cricket bat menhirs with sitting stones; two of them contain carvings of human figures, suggesting a Kacha Nagā representation. In some of them occur mithan heads. Sitting stones in general are circular, flat on the top, but convex below; a few of them contain carvings of foot-prints, frogs, fish, mithans and heavenly symbols. Tanks are found throughout the area. Near Kobāk there are pairs of tanks, which suggest, like the phallic monoliths, a cult of fertility. At Kalimkhu are the remains of a fort. In Muchidui near Bolāsān lies a dolmen tomb, perhaps containing human remains.[104]

The origin of these monoliths is uncertain; but most of them have been associated with the Mon-Khmers of the South-east Asiatic type. As Mills and Hutton suggest, their authors were either Khāsi-Syntengs or Mikirs or a mixture of both, having affinity with the Nagā practices.[105] The Mikir origin is inferred from the fact that they have close parallels with the Ḍimāpur monoliths, and the Mikirs claim that they were connected with their authors. The association of most of the monoliths with the long-handled '*dāo*', suggests connection with both the Khāsis and the Mikirs, who used it in the past, as did the Āos, who attributed the use of such a weapon to a vanished race, called *Mulungr*. The Khāsi-Syntengs

103. *J.P.A.S.B.*, XXV (N.S.), pp. 285f.
104. *J.P.A.S.B.*, XXV (N.S.), pp. 285f.
105. *Ibid.*

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are also associated with round sitting stones. The cricket bat-shaped stones, though they somewhat resemble the flat carved monoliths from Kasomārī, are also probably Khāsi-Synteṅg in origin, as they are found along with sitting stones. While the figures of frogs, fish and heavenly bodies may be Khāsi-Synteṅg, the mithans are Kuki-Chin, which displaced the buffalo of the Mon-Khmers. From the occurrence of human heads among the carvings, the practice of head-hunting is suspected,[106] which again belongs to different tribes; the carving of foot-prints has been common in Indo-China, as among the Konyaks and some peoples of Maṇipur. The cavities in the monoliths suggest that their authors burnt their dead and kept the remains therein, and that not only the Khāsi-Synteṅgs but also the Mikirs and some Kukis burnt their dead, as they do now. The Khāsi-Synteṅgs keep their remains in stone-cists or earthen pots; the Wars of Shella use the hole of a wooden post as a temporary repository for their remains. In any case, though a mixed origin of the North Cāchār monoliths is suspected, both Mills and Hutton conclude that they are to "be associated with the Khāsi-Synteṅg group of tribes".[107] But it appears to us that, while they are to be attributed mainly to theMon-Khmer culture, their close link with the Kuki-Chin-Mikir and even the Kachāri culture and the megaliths of the South-east Asiatic type, cannot be ignored. This is strongly suggested by their close parallels.

(c) *Ḍimāpur :* The ancient Kachāri capital, Ḍimāpur is one of the important sites of megalithic culture. Most of the remains appear to be contemporaneous with the Kachāri civilisation, established before the Āhom invasion in the 13th century A.D. As in those of Kasomārī and Jāmugurī, we have evidence of a touch of Hindu influence on most of them, though these are predominantly non-Aryan and associated, like the present Nagā megaliths, with elaborate rituals and the cult of fertility, as is indicated by their phallic shapes.[108] They show links with those from other parts of the State, and even with those of the Khāsis and the Muṇḍas.[109]

T. Block classifies the monoliths into Chessman, Y shaped and buffalo horn types. The ornamentations of the former type are floral and geometrical, and sometimes the ornamental bands hanging down the columns

106. *Ibid.*
107. *Ibid.*
108. Haimendorf *Naked Nagas*, pp. 31-32; R. F. Andrew St. John, *J.A.R.S.*, 1897, pp. 423-27, 641-42.
109. Gurdon, *The Khasis*, pp. 149f; Shakespear, *History of Upper Assam, Upper Burma*, etc., pp. 78f; Godwin-Austen, *J.A.S.B.*, 1874, I, pp. 4-6; J.H. Hutton, *J.R.A.I.*, VII, pp. 55-70.

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have the carvings of swords or daggers. The most striking feature, apart from the hemispheral capital, is the band, carved round the neck of the columns. On the latter type there are animal designs, carved between the three rosettes, which have divided each half into separate fields of ornamentations. The figures are those of peacocks, elephants, deer, tigers, etc. The third type, resembling buffalo horns, contain rosettes and animal carvings.[110]

Hutton points out that the monoliths from Ḍimāpur show close links with the Semā and Āngāmi posts. He carries the similarities further and adds that during the "*lisu*' ceremony, the Āngāmis even now erect wooden substitutes as phallic emblems. The significance of the Y shaped and cylindrical posts differs with different tribes. The Gāros, for instance, erect them as memorials of their dead and for ceremonial purposes,[111] and the Āos as memorials of feasts; the Gāros, Semās, Sangtāms, Thado Kukis and others tie their sacrificial animals to such forked posts, whether of stone or wood. The phallic megaliths of Ḍimāpur have, therefore, close link with the Nagā practices.[112] As Mills points out, they show a close affinity between the Kachāri and Nagā culture and indicate their belief in the cult of fertility and animism.[113] The remains of Ḍimāpur suggest the relics of a shifted development of Tibeto-Burman culture.[114]

(d) *Kasomārī-Jāmugurī:* The remains of monoliths from Kasomārī and Jāmugurī reveal further specimens of non-Aryan workmanship with Hindu influence. Some of them belong at least to the period of the Kachāri civilisation. T. Bloch noticed a chessman type similar to those of Ḍimāpur, with a hemispheral capital, containing carvings of swords and daggers. The base contains a horizontal band, and the panel below it shows various animal designs, such as lions, elephants, etc.; there are rosettes and other designs above, and the top is filled with a pear-shaped panel with decorations. Though the specimens indicate a touch of North Indian art, the designs suggest non-Aryan workmanship.[115]

Some of the Kasomārī monoliths are ornamented with human breasts like those of Ḍimāpur, suggesting the cult of fertility; some contain creepers, such as those tied by the Āngāmis round each menhir. It is possible,

110. *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1906-7, pp. 19f; Godwin-Austen *J.A.S.B.*, 1874, I. [illegible]
111. Playfair, *The Garos*, P. 17.
112. Hutton, *J.R.A·I.*, VII, pp. 55-70.
113. *A. Rev.*, April, 1928, pp. 26f.
114. J. Marshall, *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1904-5, pp. 7-8.
115. T. Bloch, *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1906-7, pp. 22-24.

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writes Hutton, that the designs on the cylindrical monoliths of Ḍimāpur had a similar origin.[116] Two stones from Kasomārī with cavities at the top contain lotus carvings, and one of them contains a four armed human figure; from his waist hang three appendages, and the one between two legs is like a tail, worn by the Konyaks and like the one on a carved stone figure at Maibong. One stone is carved into a sort of basin or cavity and outside the rim runs a trough; the inner side of the trough is carved in a symmetrical pattern. Close to it there is an oblong stone, carved into a sort of wedge-shaped trough, open at one end. Another stone is an upright slab at the foot of which there is a hole like that of the cylindrical monolith of Kasomārī. It is possible that the two holes in this slab were used for offerings, as is done by the Āngāmis in their '*lisu*' ceremony. The same idea is associated with the Ḍimāpur and Kasomārī monoliths.[117]

Writing on the Kasomārī monoliths, K.N. Dikshit points out that these monuments, with the exception of a single round one of the chessman type, consist of carved flat monoliths, pointed at the top. The largest of them measures 10 feet in length. The upper portion of monoliths usually contains the carvings of two lotus stalks with two lotus buds on either side and another on the top. Between the two stalks at the bottom is carved a dagger or a spear. Some monoliths have two lotus leaves; others have human figures at the top. The space below the stalks is usually occupied by animal or bird designs.[118]

The monoliths from the valleys of the Dhanśiri and the Dayāng have close affinities with those from Ḍimāpur; but unlike the latter place,, the former was influenced more by Hindu art. As Hutton states, if the monoliths from the former areas may be connected "with the existing remains of the Nagā tribes, we may perhaps infer that the culture of the latter people is on the down rather than the upward grade, and is a decaying remnant of a civilised culture, formerly established in the plains and subsequently extirpated from them by invasions which only allowed it to survive in the less desirable country but less accessible hills or which absorbed it into the Tāntrik worship of Hinduised Assam."[119] It is likely that the Jāmugurī monoliths represent a development later than those of Ḍimāpur, showing a rather decadent type. The remains certainly belong to the period of the contact of non-Aryan and Aryan culture. It is also possible that the Jāmugurī monoliths were influenced by extraneous art, as indicated by

116. Hutton, *J.A.S.B.*, XX (N.S.), pp. 143-47.
117. Hutton, *J.A.S.B.*, XX (N.S.), pp. 143-47.
118. *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1923-24, pp. 234-35.
119. *J.A.S.B.*, XX (N.S.), pp. 143-47.

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the carvings of tigers, which even suggest Shān influence. The difference between the Kasomārī and Ḍimāpur monoliths lies in the fact that there are no Y shaped monoliths in the former area; but in both, the cylindrical monoliths with carvings are almost similar. The dome of the cylindrical monolith at Jāmugurī, more elaborate than at Ḍimāpur, is carved with rays; the base contains carvings of elephants, which at Ḍimāpur occur only on the forked posts. If the monoliths of Jāmugurī were erected in a single row, they would resemble alignments like those of the present Lhota villages, and unlike those of Āngāmis which are in pairs or double rows, as usually at Ḍimāpur. In spite of the later development of the Kasomārī-Jāmugurī monoliths, as pointed out by Hutton, the possibility of their connection with the Tibeto-Burman and Mon-Khmer cultures of the Khāsi-Muṇḍas is indicated both by their shapes and their association with the rites and cult of fertility.

6. Other remains :

Mention may be made of a carved stone at Kigwema in the Nagā Hills, incised with a pattern representing enemy's teeth and spearheads, associated with fertility symbols; the carvings are almost similar to those from Ḍimāpur and Jāmugurī.[120] There are other carved stones and blocks in the Nagā Hills, used now as seats, round the circular '*tehuba*' of the Thevoma clan in Khonoma, carved with bone patterns and mithan horns; another with spearheads and a shield, and others with horn patterns. Another carved stone lies in the Southern Sangtām village of Photsimi; it is a menhir, carved with horizontal lines. There is another stone at Hebunamai of Memi, carved with a mithan head and footprints.[121] The dates of their erection are uncertain. Mills mentions a stone from the Kachā Nagā village of Peisa with a carved female figure, associated with the cult of fertility. It stands on a stone platform and leans on a monolith, surrounded by other stones. The writer supposes that the stone belongs to a vanished people, who once occupied parts of North Cāchār and had left traces of their highly developed stone culture.[122]

7. Significance of the Megalithic culture :

The study of the megalithic culture of Assam gives us an idea that the megaliths had a socio-economic and religious importance and were erected both for the living and in memory of the dead. In fact, the whole primitive life of the individuals and the community at large might have been bound

120. Hutton, *Man*, 1926, p. 74.
121. Hutton, *J.R.A.I.*, LVI, pp. 71f.
122. *Man*, 1930, pp. 34-35.

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up with them. This is shown both by the ancient remains and the present practices of most of the tribes. As Heine Geldern points out, megaliths are associated with notions concerning life after death, and these serve as a link between the living and the dead; through their magical virtue, they increase the fertility of men, their crops and their prosperity.[123] Whether among the Khāsis or the Nagās or others, the cult of ancestor-worship was common. This helped not only to link the living and the dead but also to increase one's prosperity.[124] Some of the megaliths from North Cāchār with cavities and containing remains of the dead are evidently relics of this ancestor cult as well as the cult of fertility. As Mills and Hutton rightly observe, the menhirs and dolmens of the area "must be interpreted in the light of the Khāsi, Synteṇg and Nagā monoliths and dolmens as providing phallic memorials, through which the soul matter of the living or of the dead assists the fertilisation of Nature, the upright stone representing the male and the flat one the female principle".[125] The monuments with cavities may be associated with the same idea, and the holes were probably made to hold water, contain offerings or to promote rain, suggesting the Rengmā Nagā practice of making holes in their graves to bring down rain for good harvest. The monoliths from Kasomārī with similar shapes may be associated with the same idea.[126] The Kārtong stones suggest the phallic cists of the Konyaks to hold skulls as at Derebōrā, though the monoliths at Bolāsān contain holes, too small for holding skulls. "In any case, the North Cāchār hollowed monoliths must represent a rather specialised development of a phallic ancestor cult, typical of Assam, widely spread in South-east Asia and extending over even to Oceania and Madagascar."[127]

The megaliths again are associated with the soul matter, residing in phallic menhirs and dolmens, and with head-hunting which ultimately increased one's prosperity.[128] As remarked by Hutton, the practice of erecting megaliths, whether of stone or wood, and the erection of soul figures in graves, as done by the Konyaks and others in Assam, as in the Pacific area, is associated with a belief in the soul matter and the cult of fertility. The association of some of the monoliths of North Cāchār and Ḍimāpur with the remains of the dead along with their phallic shape

123. Prehistoric Researches in the Netherland Indies, *Science and Scientist in the Netherland Indies*, 1945, p. 149.

124. Haimendorf. *J.R.A.S.B.*, IX, pp. 149f; Quaritch Wales, *The Making of Greater India*, pp. 58-59.

125. *J.P.A.S.B.*, XXV, (N.S.) pp. 285f.

126. Hutton, *J.A.S.B.*, XX (N.S.), pp. 143-47.

127. Mills and Hutton, *J.P.A.S.B.*, XXV (N.S.), pp. 285f.

128. Haimendorf, *Man in India*, XXV, pp. 74f; *Research and Progress, V*, pp. 95-100; App. to Schnitger's *Forgotten Kingdoms in Sumatra*, pp. 215f.

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points to this idea of soul matter, which was believed to increase one's crops and welfare.[129]

This cult of fertility, associated with thephallic menhirs and dolmens, representing male and female principles, can be gathered from both the ancient remains and present practices of almost all the tribes, particularly the Nagās. This is indicated also by their association with tanks, rice fields and all rituals.[130] The meaning of the phallic megaliths cf Ḍimāpur can be gathered from the Āngāmi '*lisu*' ceremony, when they erect wooden phallic posts; the giver of feasts among them, as with the Āos, Semās, Sangtāms and Rengmās, is belived to have prosperity. These posts are associated with the organs cf generation, indicated by their shape, the straight post standing for the male and the forked one for the female principle. Both the cylindrical and forked monuments of Ḍimāpur, therefore, may be associated with the fertility cult and the increase of one's prosperity.[131] In fact, this phallic fertility cult may be associated with all kinds of megaliths, whether of stone or wood.[132]

The various methods and manner of erection of stones among the tribes cannot be reduced to a single formula. They are associated, as we have noted, with graves, or the ancestor cult, offerings, feasts of merit or social prestige, as among the Āngāmis,[133] head-hunting[134] and other practices. These are explained not only by the remains of North Cāchār, Kasomārī-Jāmugurī, Ḍimāpur and other places but also by the present elaborate rituals and practices of the tribes. All these fundamental ideas are, in fact, interlinked with one another, and almost identical meaning may be gathered from the megalithic erections of the people of South-east Asia and the Oceanic world.

8. Conclusion :

The study of the megalithic culture of Assam and its comparison with some present practices make us convinced that its origin must be attributed to the lithic stage of culture.[135] The authors of this culture had close

129. Hutton, *C.R.I.*, 1931, I, I, pp. 399f; 406f; *Caste in India*, pp. 216-17.
130. Hutton, *J.R.A.I.*, LII, pp. 242-49; *Ibid.*, LVI, pp. 71-82
131. Hutton, *J.R.A.I.*, VII, pp. 55-70.
132. Hutton, *J.R.A.I.*, LVI, pp. 71-78.
133. Haimendorf, *J.R.A.S.B.*, IX, pp. 149f; Godwin-Austen, *J.R.A.I.*,IV, pp. 144-47.
134. Hutton *I.R.A.I.*, LII, pp. 242-49; *Ibid*, LVI, pp. 71-82.
135. See Hutton, (*Man in India*, X, pp. 214-15; *J.R.A.I*, LVIII, p. 408) who attributes the erection of megaliths and head-hunting to the palaeolithic stage of human culture.

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links with those of the South-east Asiatic region, parts of India and even beyond India in the west. The wonderful similarity of the megaliths of the people of different origin like the Khāsis, Nagās, Gāros and others makes us believe that different elements contributed to their development. Besides the Mon-Khmer Khāsis, some Nagās like the Chāngs and the Konyaks may have contained an Austric strain.[136] It would be a mistake to attribute all the megalithic remains to the Khāsi-Syntengs alone; because megaliths of Assam are not merely associated with graves but also with fertility, soul matter, festivals and feasts, head-hunting, magic and prosperity. Moreover, the burning of the dead has been practised also by the Mikirs and the Gāros, and there is no great difference between the Khāsi practice of keeping the remains and the stone-cist burial of skulls by the Konyaks. The megalithic culture of all the tribes has been part and parcel of their whole social existence, bound up with their life here and hereafter. The use of stone for graves and other purposes is no doubt primitive and ancient; so also is the belief in magic and fetishism or animism, which can be traced back to the lithic stage of human culture. Both the grave and the phallic stones served the same idea of fertility and are, therefore, functionally indistinguishable. The elaborate rituals, connected with them, may have been worked out differently by different tribes, but all are basically the same.

It appears from the study of this megalithic culture that the fusion of racial elements took place at an early period and inter-tribal movements were not rare. Some of the artistic motifs, like the lotus, occurring on some of the ancient megaliths, suggest that not only the Mon-Khmers and the Tibeto-Burmans but also the Alpine-Aryans contributed to the art of the megalith builders. This influence of the Hindus on non-Aryan monuments is indicative of an early fusion of races. Though both the Aryans and the non-Aryans contributed to the composite culture of Assam, the foundation of certain elements of this culture was no doubt laid by the non-Aryans.[137] Tāntrikism, for instance, which was so elaborately worked out in ancient Assam, may in its origin, be attributed to the phallic cult, associated with the megalithic culture of the tribes. The meaning of megaliths, like that of the neoliths, and their bearing on the foundation of Assam's culture, will be more illumined on an examination of the racial strains in the population of Assam, and conversely the megalithic complex of the land has an important bearing on our understanding of its racial problem.

136. *C.R.I.*, 1931, I, I, pp. 357f.
137. See Chap. VI, Section 4.

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SECTION 2

RACIAL ELEMENTS

1. Introduction :

The prehistoric and other remains definitely prove that Assam was inhabited by various racial elements, and in fact, this land is considered as a great anthropological museum, containing even now some primitive peoples.[1] But, no systematic study of these has been made. We shall find reasons to believe that while this State received wave after wave of immigrants from South-east Asia and the Oceanic world, as from India and the West, some elements of the inhabitants were probably indigenous, and that some people were at times sent out from this region.

Anything like a chronological treatment of the subject is impossible in view of the fact that no prehistoric human skulls have yet been found, and only a few anthropometric measurements have been taken. Not to speak of Assam, the problem of the origin of men and their early migrations is disputed.[2] But, the wieght of evidence indicates that not only the Deccan Plateau[3] but also the Kaśmīra region in India, as shown by the Siwalik fassils, were inhabited by some of the earliest men.[4]

According to geological researches, the Himalayan regions were occupied by a sea called Tethys, and that in course of time two promontories in the region about Kaśmīra and Assam were formed. It is possible that, like the former region, Assam also became habitable for men in the latest period of the tertiary age. In close proximity to this region, remains of a palaeolithic flake industry in Burma have been found, which is taken to be a representative of the earliest palaeolithic stone culture, resembling that of Godavari.[5] But, as we have stated, no cave with human remains

1. Haimendoıf, *The Naked Nagas*, p. 3; J. B. Fuller, Intro. to Playfair's. *Garos* (XIII); Peal, *J.A.S.B.*, LXV, III, pp. 17f.

2. See Wright, *The Origin and Antiquity of Man*, 1913; Avevury, *Pre-historic Times*, p. 426; B. S. Sewell, *Man in India*, X, pp. 10f; Rivers, *Presidential Address, British Association Report*, 1911, pp. 490-92.

3. See P. T. S. Aiyangar, *Stone Age in India*, p. 5.

4. E. O. James, *Introduction to Anthropology*, pp. 61f.

5. See H. C. Das Gupta, *J.D.L.*,V, pp. 14-15; De Morgan, *Prehistoric Man*, 1924, p. 280.

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has been discovered in Assam. It is, therefore, impossible to determine whether this State was inhabited by pre-palaeolithic or even palaeolithic men, unless this is proved on the basis of actual human remains. Our study of the subject, therefore, will mainly be restricted to the surviving elements. But here also, as we have stated, no proper anthropometric measurements have been taken and, moreover, writers like Ridgeway and Walcher believe that even the science of anthropometry is not very reliable for the study of men;[6] nor is it possible to find them in their original features after centuries of admixture. With the help of a study of their routes of migration, ethnography, philology and other allied factors, we shall try, however, to arrive at certain conclusions in determining the main racial types.

2. Routes of migration :

Assam could become a museum of races, because it is situated in "one of the great migration routes of mankind".[7] The various elements passing through Assam from India on the one side and South-east Asia on the other left their substratum in both the hills and plains.

The possible routes of migrations were three or four: first through the north or the mountain passes of Tibet, Nepal and Bhutan; second through valley of the Ganges and the Brahmaputra from India and the west; third by sea or the Bay of Bengal, passing through Bengal or Burma, and fourthly the Assam-Burma routes, one over the Pātkāi passes in the north-east, leading from the Liḍu-Mārgheriṭā road to China through the Hukawang Valley in Burma and the other through Maṇipur and Cāchār in the south-east or south of Assam.

It is doubtful whether the northern route helped much in the migration of racial elements; but important trade routes existed through the mountain passes between Assam and Tibet, as by waterways through the Brahmaputra and the Ganges. The existence of both the routes is shown, as we have noted elsewhere, by the classical sources, like the *Periplus* and Ptolemy's geography. The routes through mountain passes of Bhutan and Tibet are also mentioned in other later sources.[8] On the basis of these sources, it may be suggested that some racial elements, such as the Alpines and the Indo-Chinese made their way in small numbers into Assam through these passes in the north.

6. See *C.R.I.*, 1913, V, I, p. 517.
7. J. P. Mills, *A. Rev.*, March, 1928, p. 24
8. See Pemberton, *Report on Bootan*, p. 144; Hamilton, II, p.. 743f; Tavernier, *Travels*, p. 221; *Cultural History*, Section 2.

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The contact with India through the Brahmaputra and the Ganges and the land routes is shown not only by the classical sources, but also by the accounts of Yuan Chwang.[9] It was through these routes that the pre-Aryans and Aryans entered the Assam valley. Contact with Southern India was possibly by sea, through the Bay of Bengal. An important reference is made by Pliny, (vi, xvii-xxii) who states that the people of Ceylon knew the Seres or people of Assam through trade.[10] J. H. Hutton is perhaps right in assuming that some elements of the Nagās migrated from Southern India by sea and entered Assam through Burma.[11] Even the sea route to China is mentioned by Yuan Chwang in the 7th century A.D.,[12] and the passage down the Brahmaputra to the Bay of Bengal is said to have been under the control of the rulers of Kāmarūpa at that time.[13]

Besides the Indo-Chinese races, Oceanic elements may have come both by land and sea routes via Burma; of all the routes, the most important were through the river valleys of Burma and Assam and the mountain passes on the Assam-Burma borders. The earliest reference to the Assam-Burma route is found in the accounts of Chang Kien, on the basis of which Pelliot has shown that from 200 B.C. there was a regular route by land to China through Assam, Upper Burma and Yunnan. Pelliot has described two routes from Burma through Maṇipur; but he has failed to take into account the transfer of the Burmese capital from Prome to Halim about A.D. 750.[14] P. C. Bagchi points out that the routes from Pāṭaliputra through Assam-Burma to China were three: the first through the Pātkāi to Upper Burma, the second through Maṇipur up to the Chindwin, and the third through Arakan up to the Irrawaddy, all leading to Kunming in China.[15] A detailed description of the Assam-Burma routes is given in *Kia-Tan* of the 8th century A. D.[16] Yuan Chwang's accounts of Assam throw light on this question.[17] Phayre points out that in early times contact between Gangetic India and Tagaung lay only through Maṇipur.[18] At a subsequent time many routes were opened through Dihong, the Mishmi route, the Phungan pass leading to China, the route through Maṇipur to the Irrawaddy and the Pātkāi passes to Bhamo. Two other routes

9. See Chap. VI, Section 2.
10. See Taylor, *J.A.S.B.*, 1847, I. pp. 43f.
11. *Man in India*, IV, pp. 1-13; *Ibid*, XII, pp. 1 18.
12. *Life of Yuan Chwang*, p. 188.
13. *Ibid*, (Intro.), XXVI-XXVII.
14. *Bulletin de l'Ecole Franciase de Extreme Orient*, 1904, pp. 131-373.
15 *India and China* pp. 7f, 16f.
16. *Ibid.*, pp. 18f.
17. Watters, II, pp. 185f.
18. *History of Burma*, p. 15.

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lay through Hukawang valley leading across the mountains from Myitkyana to Tipland near Mārgheritā and the Chaukan pass.[19] The other routes lay through the passes of Donkin, Natu and Jilap. It was through these routes that the people from South-east Asia and China made their way into Assam.

3. Racial types :

The importance of the routes of migrations will also be evident from the study of racial types.[20] As we have made it clear, no proper anthropometric measurement has so far been taken. Waddell's measurements[21] are broad based and R.B. Dixon's measurements, particularly of a few Khāsis[22] are insufficient evidence to come to any definite conclusion. Dixon, however, finds traces of the four important types with intermediaries, in the Khāsis and other elements: *Bracycephalic Leptorrhine* (B.L.), *Dolichocephalic Platyrrhine* (D.P.), *Bracycephalic Platyrrhine* (B.P.) and *Dolichocephalic Leptorrhine* (D.L.). Broadly speaking, most of the tribes contain in varying proportions Negrito, Austro-Asiatic, Alpine-Aryan and Mongolian elements. Writing on the areas of diffusion, Dixon thinks that the B.L. type "appears to represent the southern extension of a great area, characterised by this factor, which includes most of Central Asia and the Great Plateaus, Northern China, and much of the north-eastern portion of the continent, and as a type shows very close relationship with the Alpine, so widely spread in Central and Western Europe. The B.P. type on the other hand represents the western extension of that type which forms the fundamental stratum among the population of Southern China and much of South-eastern Asia and the Malaya Archipelago." This "type, pressed from the east and north-east into Assam at a very early date", partly driving back and partly "assimilating the still earlier aboriginal Negroid D.P. population. It brought with it the ancestral form of the Mon-Khmer speech". Then after sometime "the Aryan immigrants, characterised by a strong D.L. factor reached Bengal and Assam by way of the Ganges valley".[23]

19. See Peal, *J.A.S.B.*, XLVIII, II, pp. 69-82; Jenkins, *P.A.S.B.*, 1869, pp. 67-76; Pemberton, *Eastern Frontier etc.*, pp. 54; Robert Reid, *J.R.S.A.*, XCII, pp. 241-47; M'Cosh, *J.A.S.B.*, V, pp. 203-204; R. C. Majumdar, *Hindu Colonies in the Far East*, pp. 12-13, 226-27.

20. See G. Ruggeri (*J.D.L.*, V, p. 216) for types of India; also B. S. Guha, *An Outline of the Racial Ethnology of India*, Cal., 1937.

21. *J.A.S.B.*, 1900, III.

22. See T. C. Raychaudhuri (*J.D.L.*, XXV, pp. 1-24) who disagrees with Dixon's conclusions.

23. *Man in India*, II, pp. 1-13; *Racial History of Man*, pp. 244, 261, 265.

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A.C. Haddon traces D.P., D.M. (*Dolichocephalic Mesorrhine*) or Nesiot, M.P., M.M., B.L. and D.L. types.[24] Hutton finds traces of the Negritos, Proto-Austroloids, Austro-Asiatic, Indonesian, Melanesian, Alpine, Aryan and Mongolian types. The Negritos are believed to have come from the north-east[25] and Proto-Austroloids from Palestine,[26] followed by early Mediterraneans, from whom the Austro-Asiatic speech is said to have been derived, later Mediterraneans, Alpines and Aryans from the west, and Mongolians from the east.[27] S. C. Roy suggests that a section of the Mediterranean-Dravidian passed eastward through Assam and became the Indonesian or Nesiot element. There appears to be a migration of that element also along the coast of Burma to Assam. Roy adds that in Assam an originally dolichocephalic pre-Dravidian element with some proto-Negroid stratum has been overlaid and submerged by later aggressions, and he finds there a Nesiot element and Aryans.[28] Traces of the Melanesians, derived from the proto-Austroloid and the Negritos with a Mongolian admixture, are noticed, particularly in the hilly regions between Assam and Burma. Culturally they are associated with the separation of skulls from the dead, bachelors' quarters, head-hunting, and a canoe cult. Hutton suggests also their association with the Austro-Asiatic and Indonesian culture. He further believes that the Austro-Asiatics might have migrated from the west, suggesting an alternative route across India and the Bay of Bengal for the Elamites and Mediterraneans to have reached the Indian Archipelago, and that there was again a movement from the coast of Burma to Assam; similar movements may have taken place from the east coast of India.[29] In writing about the supposed connection between the Austro-Asiatic, pre-Dravidian and Muṇḍa languages, Hutton points to two routes of migrations, one from Eastern India to the Pacific and the other from the Pacific world to India.[30] In another place he traces the origin and diffusion of the Austro-Asiatic and Indonesian culture either from Southern India, travelling to the Pacific region and then entering Assam or coming from the side of the Indian Archipelago.[31] It appears probable that the Austro-Asiatic culture,

24. *The Races of Man*, pp. 115f, 156f; also Hutton, Intro. to Smith's *Ao Naga tribe* (XII-XV); Intro. to Mills's *Lhota Nagas*, (XXXVII).
25. W. H. Flower, *J.R.A.I.*, XVIII, pp. 73-91.
26. B. S. Sewell, Pros. of the Sixteenth Indian Science Congress, pp. 333f.
27. *C.R.I.*, 1931, I, I, p. 460.
28. *Man in India*, XIV, pp. 273f.
29. *C.R.I.*, 1931, I, I, pp. 444f.
30. *Ibid*, pp. 357f.
31. *Man in India*, IV, pp. 1-13; *Ibid* XII, pp. 1-18; *Man*, 1926, pp. 222-24; *Ibid*, 1930, p. 81.

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having close affinities with the Indonesian one, may have entered Assam both from India and the Pacific world.

Most of the Mongolian migrations to Assam took place through the north-eastern and southern routes of Assam via Burma.[32] The Nagās are believed to have come from various directions. One wave of the Tibeto-Burmans came probably from the north, comprising the Akā, Mishmi, Gāro, Mikir, Kachāri, etc., another from the south, the Lushāi-Kukis and another of an earlier wave, the Kol-Mon-Annam, extending over parts of the area, now occupied by the Nagās. The *Boḍos* are also believed to have come from the north, and it is possible that they got mixed up with the Mon-Khmer-Muṇḍas in course of time.[33]

(a) *Negritos :* On the basis of physical and other features, the existence of Negritos, allied to the Papuans and the Andamanese, is pointed out by some writers.[34] The same element formed one of the earliest strains in the population of the Assam hills. As Mills points out, the prehistoric "inhabitants of the mountains of Assam were almost certainly Negritos, little dark men with curly hair....Traditions speak vaguely of them and their curly hair still survives. It was probably they who made the little stone celts, which are frequently found in the hills."[35] It is possible, as suggested by B.S. Sewell, that they came to Assam and India from the north-east.[36] Both physical features and other aspects of material culture point to the existence of this strain, particularly among some Nagās. Hutton finds traces of Papuan and Melanesian features among some of them.[37] Though not common among the Semās, Āngāmis and Lhotas, instances of woolly hair have been noticed among the Āos,[38] Rengmās,[39] Phoms and Yamchings of the Konyaks,[40] in the Kacha Nagā country, particularly in North Cāchār; the Thados have this strain with prominent iaws.[41] The Āngāmi tradition speaks of such peoples. Hutton noticed

32. Mills, *A. Rev.*, March, 1928, pp. 24f; *Ibid*, April, p. 26.
33. Hutton, Intro to Mills' *The Lhota Nagas*, (XVIf.).
34. B. S. Guha, *Nature*, May, 1928; June 1929; *C.R.I.*, 1931, I, III.
35. *A. Rev.*, 1928, pp. 24f; *J.A.R.S.*, 1933, pp. 3-6.
36. *Man in India*, X, pp. 10f; S. K. Chatterji, *Indo-Aryan and Hindi*, pp. 33f.
37. *C.R.I.*, 1931, I, I, pp. 443f; *Caste in India*, pp. 2-3; B.S. Guha, *Racial Ethnology of India*, p, 130.
38. Intro. to Smith's *Ao Naga tribe*, XIIf.
39. Mills, *The Rengma Nagas*, pp. 16-17.
40. Hutton, *M.A.S.B.*, XI, p. 17.
41. Hutton, Intro. to Shaw's (*Note on the Thado Kukis*), *J.A.S.B.*, (N.S.) XXIV pp. 4f.

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also prominent jaws and small stature, associated with the Negrito strain, among the Āos, Phoms and other Konyaks.[42]

Both ethnography and the material culture of the tribes also point to the existence of such a strain. The Nagā reverence for the ficus, indicates a Negroid cult, spread over the Oceanic area; one might suspect also a Negroid belief in the practice of hanging combs of bees and wasps in the entrance to the houses of some Nagās, found also in Andaman.[43] The blowguns of the Thados[44] are similar to those of the people of Polynesia and the Philippines, while the Karens of Burma used a genuine blowgun.[45] The use of blowgun, like that of the simple bow among some tribes of Assam is taken to be a Negrito survival, as in Malaya and the Philippines.[46] The practice of exposure of the dead or the tree-burial of the dead due to an '*āpatiā*' (unnatural) death among some Nagās, as among some people of Indonesia, the use of a kind of thorn-lined trap for catching fish among the Nagās of the North and Thados, as in Melanesia,[47] the belief in a perilous path, which is required to be passed by the spirit of the dead, common among the tribes, as in Andaman and the Pacific area, and other material factors, including a few crude specimens of art are taken to be survivals of the Negrito strain among the Assam tribes.[48]

These factors of importance seem to be supported by traditions of dark little men or jungle folk among most of the tribes. We have pointed out to the Zemi tradition of such men called *Siemi* in North Cāchār, the remnants of which are believed to have been blocked into a cave near Hāflong by a Kachāri king.[49] Most of the tribes have traditions of such men.[50] On the basis of this, mention may be made of the '*Mopia*' people, who are believed to have been the dwellers of the region, north of the Pāṭkāi; similar reference is made to the monkey folk (*Moinaknok*).[51] But as we have stated, it is unsafe to rely upon such traditions, as upon

42. Hutton, *Man in India*, VII, pp. 257f.
43. *M.A.S.B.*, XI, pp. 6f; *C.R.I.*, 1931, I, I, p. 397.
44. Hutton, *Man*, 1924, pp. 104-7.
45. Marshall, *The Karen People of Burma*, p. 96.
46. Skeat & Blagden, *Pagan Races of the Malaya Peninsula*, II, p. 280; Sawyer, *Inhabitants of the Philippines*, pp. 202f.
47. Balfour, *Man*, 1925, p. 21.
48. Hutton, *Man in India*, VII, pp. 251-62.
49. Mills, *J.A.R.S.*, 1933, pp. 3f.
50. See Hutton, *J.P.A.S.B.*, (N.S.) XXVI, pp. 231-39; *The Sema Nagas*, p. 192; *The Angami Nagas*, p. 257; *The Lhota Nagas*, XXI, 89f.
51. See Peal, *J.A.S.B.*, LXIII, III, p. 16.

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those referring to the origin of the tribes from caves. The physical features and other aspects of the material culture of the tribes that we have examined, however, indicate that some features of the earliest human culture of Asia were evolved here and that Negroid element found its way into Assam at an early period from the Oceanic area. This is definitely found among some Nagās of the inaccessible hills, as shown by their "frizzly hair, prominent or aquiline nose, in their very excitable disposition ....and in the artistic bent....as well as in a number of minor items of material culture, which can be traced from Assam at any rate to Fiji".[52]

(b) *Austro-Asiatic Mon-Khmer, Khāsi-Syntengs:* Some of the neoliths that we have described, almost certainly belong to an early period of neolithic culture in Assam, and migrations of some neolithic men took place in that period. We can infer their existence also on the basis of the use of taro as a staple diet, as among the Konyaks like that of the Mentamai Isles off Sumatra. The Konyaks in fact, represent one of the earliest inhabitants of the hills of Assam.[53] We are on firmer grounds when we come to the later neolithic culture, which is believed to have been brought by the speakers of the Mon-Khmer speech not later than 2500 B. C. Heine Geldern associates this culture with the cultivation of millet, and rice, cattle-rearing, the erection of magaliths and raising of ancestral figures in graves and head-hunting.[54]

The Khāsi- Syntengs, speaking the Mon-Khmer speech, are associated with the Austro-Asiatic people. The term Austric is a linguistic rather than an ethnic one.[55] On the basis of philology, Schmidt has traced the affinities of the Muṇḍa, Palaung, Wa, Malaya, Nicobarese Mon-Khmer-Khāsi and others, consisting of the Austro-Asiatic branch, and forming with the Austronesian, Polynesian, Melanesian, Indonesian, etc., the Austric family.[56] F. A. Uxbond extends the group to include the Hungarian; but Hevesy, disputing the existence of the Austric group as a whole, connects the Muṇḍa language with the Ugrian.[57] Rivet suggests that this group should be called Oceanic, consisting of the Australian, Papuan and Tasmanian, their centre of diffusion being either

52. Hutton, *Man in India*, XII, pp. 1-18.

53. Haimendorf, *G.J.*, XCI, p. 203; *J.R.A.I.*, LXVIII, pp. 377-78.

54. Prehistoric Researches in the Netherland Indies, *Science and Scientist in the Netherland Indies*, 1945. (New York).

55. *C.R.I.*, 1931, I, I, pp. 443f.

56. Grierson, *L.S.I.*, II. (Intro.), 4f; *Ibid.*, I, I, pp. 32-33; S. K. Chatterji, *Indo-Aryan and Hindi*, p. 35; Ribot, *Pros. of the Third Pan-Pacific Science Congress*, Tokyo 1926.

57. *B.S.O.S.*, London, VI, pp. 187-200.

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in the Indian Archipelago or in Southern Asia, spreading by sea. Przyluski has even raised the problem of relations between the Austro-Asiatic and the Sumerian.[58]

It appears that though the Khāsi-Syntengs have Mongolian features and mixed with other elements, they represent with their Mon-Khmer speech the only known peoples of the Austric stock in Assam, having close affinities with the Kol-Mon-Annam group of tribes,[59] including the Hos and the Muṇḍas. This is based not only in their linguistic similarities, (Table 1) but also in the use of similar types of stone celts and iron hoes.[60] Gurdon rightly points out that the Khāsis came from the south-east; on the basis of the similarity of stone celts, he contends "that the Khāsis are connected with the people who inhabited the Malaya Peninsula and Chotanagpur at the time of the stone age".[61] On the study of ethnography of some Nagās and Mikirs, Gurdan rightly concludes that the Mon-Annam race once occupied a much larger area in Assam.[62]

Besides the Khāsi-Syntengs, other tribes of the Austro-Asiatic stock are believed to have migrated to Assam from the Pacific area, perhaps from the Philippines, as suggested by the use of buffalo in the Nagā Hills and terraced cultivation among the Āngāmis.[63] Moreover, the practice of head-hunting, fertility cults, megaliths, etc. are associated with Austro-Asiatic culture, having close parallels among the Assam tribes. Hutton rightly points out "that the practice of head-hunting, the erection of megaliths, and the theory of the soul matter as a fertiliser belong to the Nagā culture......and are to be associated with the buffalo keeping tribes, who inhabited the hills before the Gayal or Mithan-keeping Kukis.. On general grounds, I am inclined to associate the buffalo with an Austro-Asiatic culture or Indonesian culture ....and to assign the head-hunting and soul fertiliser belief to the same Austro-Asiatic or Indonesian culture".[64] It appears, therefore , that survivals of this culture are found among the Chāng and Konyak Nagās.[65] Writing on the Nagā-Boḍo affinities, Hutton concludes that even the *Boḍos*, like the Nagās, may have

58. *Pre-Aryan and Pre-Dravidian in India*, (Intro.), X
59. Peal, *J.A.S.B.*, LXV, III, pp. 20-24.
60. Hutton, *C.R.I.*, 1931, I, I, pp. 357f.
61. *The Khasis*, pp. 11-14; also Mills, *A. Rev.* 1928, April, p. 26.
62. *The Khasis*, pp. 11-14.
63. Hutton, Intro. to Smith's *Ao Naga tribe* (XII-XV); Intro. to Mills's *Lhota Nagas*, (XXXVIII); *C.R.I.*, 1931, I, I, pp. 444f; Mills, *A. Rev.*, Aug., 1928, pp. 16f.
64. *J.R.A.I.*, LVIII, p. 406.
65. *C.R.I.*, 1931, I, I, pp. 444f.

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been connected with the Ho-Muṇḍa-Mon-Khmer families.[66] The Gāros, for instance, have absorbed Khāsi and Nagā blood.[67] It is possible that the people of the Austro-Asiatic culture were numerous at one time, and in varying proportions an Austro-Asiatic strain may be found in most of the tribes. Ethnically at least, the speakers of the speech had close affinities with the people of the Pacific area, constituting the Indonesian culture.[68] The Mon-Khmer speakers were followed by waves of the Tibeto-Burmans, who entered Assam from various directions and at different periods of history.

(c) *Indo-Chinese stock—Tibeto-Burmans :* Both physical features and other aspects of culture definitely indicate that the great bulk of Assam's population of both the hills and plains consisted of the Tibeto-Burmans of the Indo-Chinese stock. This is confirmed also by a few remains and literary evidence. Even the Mon-Khmer Khāsis are associated with the first Mongolian overflow into the land, followed by the *Boḍos* from the north-eastern direction.[69]

The Upper courses of the Yangtse and the Hoang-ho in North-west China were the original home of the Tibeto-Burman races and they entered Assam through the courses of the rivers Brahmaputra, Chindwin, Irrawaddy, Salween, Mekong and Menam and mountain passes of Assam and Burma through the north-east and south-east, when they found the speakers of the Mon-Khmer speech occupying some hilly regions, and therefore, the latter were driven into different directions.[70] Some of them travelled to Nepal and Tibet, some occupied the foot of the Himalayas from Sadiyā to the Punjab in the west, and the rest occupied the hills of Assam, such as the Gāro Hills, Lushāi Hills and Manipur, Mikir Hills, Cāchār and the Nagā Hills and gradually spread over the plains in both Upper and Lower Assam, along the course of the Brahmaputra on both its banks.[71]

When and how the migration and settlement of the various branches of the same family took place is uncertain; but, as we have noted, the weight of evidence proves that the migration of tribes is to be attributed

66. *A.C.R.*, 1921, III, I, (App. C, pp. XVIIf.)
67. Playfair, *The Garos*, pp. 22f.
68. *C.R.I.*, 1931, I, I, pp. 444f.
69. Mills, *A. Rev.*, March, 1928, pp. 24f; April, p. 26; Gait, *History of Assam*, p. 253; Risley, *C.R.I.*, 1901, I, I, pp. 252-53; *People of India*, pp. 41-42; *Camb. History of India*, I, p. 47.
70. Grierson, *L.S.I.*, I. I. pp. 41-48; *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, (Indian Empire), I, p. 295.
71. *C.R.I.*, 1901, I, I, pp. 252-53; *L.S.I.*, I, I, pp. 41-44.

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to different periods in the history of the land and that most of them, if not all, came after the intrusion of the Aryans from the west. It was after their distribution and occupation of particular areas that they came to be known as Nagās, *Boḍos*, etc., and the areas of their occupation were known by their tribal names. Even after their settlement, migrations from one place to another continued till recent times. The classical writers, beginning at least with the first century A. D. seem to refer to some tribes almost in their present habitat.

We have made a few references to some tribes in another place. Pliny mentions a people called the Mandai in whose country lies the mount of Maleus, beyond the Ganges and Palibothra or Pāṭaliputra.[72] It is possible to identify the Mandai with the Gāros and Maleus with the Gāro Hills, because the Gāros are known as *mānde*, meaning man.[73] The Sesatae of the *Periplus* and the Besadae of Ptolemy were the same hill people of Assam, allied to the Gāros, Nagās, Lushāi-Kukis or the Mishmis.[74] The Anthropophagi of Ptolemy or the Alitrophagi of Ammianus Marcellinus were probably a branch of the Mishmis or Nagās. Ptolemy mentions other tribes, confirmed by Ammianus. The Garinaoi may be identified with the Gāros; Nabannoe, the Rābhās; Asmeraoei, the Miris; Batoe, the Bhutiās and the Nagalogoe, the Nagās.[85] The Barrhai of Ptolemy appear to be the *Boḍos*. Gerini rightly identifies the Tiladai with the Kuki-Chins.[76] These references indicate that some tribes had already settled in this land before the first century A. D., if not earlier.

When the differentiation of the tribes took place is not known, but linguistically they may be divided into many families with further subdivisions and clans. The Tibeto-Burman family as a whole is divided into two main branches: North Assam and Assam-Burmese.

(i) *North-Assam branch*[76a] : The tribes like the Akā, Dafalā, Miri, Ābar and Mishmi, now occupying the foot of the hills in the north, extending from western Assam to Sadiyā in the east, are included in this branch.[77] The group may again be taken as a link between the Tibeto-

72. McCrindle, *Megasthenes and Arrian*, pp. 131f, 173.
73. Playfair, *The Garos*, pp. 7f.
74. Schoff, *The Periplus*, pp. 47-48, 261, 278; Taylor, *J.A.S.B.*, 1847, I, pp. 32f.
75. Taylor, *Ibid*, pp. 52f.
76. Gerini, *Researches on Ptolemy's Geography*, pp. 362f, 744f, 830.

76a. A dood description of some allied people of NEFA may be found in Verrier Elwin's book : *A Philosophy for N.E.F.A.* It contains, however, little historical information, and is primarily an anthropological work, and some of his suggestions, aimed at the up-lift of the people in the regions are more theoretical than practical.

77. *L.S.I.*, I, I, pp. 59f; *Ibid*, III, II.

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Himalayan and the Assam-Burmese branches; but even within their own group, striking differences both in physical features, customs and dialects have been evolved. The dialectical similarities and differences will be evident from the table (No. 2). Most of the tribal names were given by their neighbours and plains people. The Akās call themselves *Hrusso;*[78] the Dafalās, *Niso*, *Nising* or *Bangi* (man).[79] The term *Miri* means man;[80] the *Ābar*, independent; the latter are known as *Abuit* or *Ādi-āmi* (hill men) and *Madgu*.[82] All of them are divided into various clans, mostly exogamous.

(ii) *Assam-Burmese branch : Nagā group :* The origin of the word *Nagā*' is obscure;[83] but the weight of evidence proves that it is to be associated with '*nok*' (man).[84] Linguistically, the group consists of three main sub-groups.[85] (a) western—which includes Āngāmi, Semā, Rengmā and Kezomā; (b) central—Āo, Lhota, Tengsā, Thukumi and Yāchumi (c) eastern—Angwanku, Banpārā, Chingmegnu, Mutoniā, Chāng, Assiringīā, Mosāng, Shāngge and Nāmsāngiā. There are besides the different families of the Konyaks. Not only between these three groups, but also among sub-divisions of the same group there are differences of both physical features, customs and dialects. The linguistic difference will be evident from the table (No. 3).[86]

The Āngāmis have traditions of coming from the south, the Mao region and Maṇipur. They are divided into two main divisions—Kepezoma and Thekrono, further sub-divided into exogamous clans.[87] The Semās also point to their migration from the south; they are divided into many exogamous clans.[88] The Rengmās are broadly divided into two

78. Dalton, *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal*, pp. 37f; Hesselmeyer, *J.A.S.B.*, XXXVII II, pp. 194-95; Waddell, *J.A.S.B.*, 1900, III, p. 19.

79. Robinson, *J.A.S.B.*, XX, pp. 126f; Waddell, p. 43; Dalton, p. 35; Mackenzie, *History of the Relations with the Tribes of the North-Eastern Frontier of India*, pp. 27f.

80. W. Crooke, *E.R.E.*, I, pp. 33f; M'Cosh, *J.A.S.B.*, V, p. 194; E. J. T. Dalton, *J.A.S.B.*, XIV, I, pp. 250f, 427f.

81. W. Crooke, *E.R.E.*, I, pp. 33f. Dunbar, *Frontiers*, p. 100.

82. Dunbar, *Abors and Galongs*, pp. 1f; A. Hamilton, *In Abor Jungles*, pp. 84f.

83. Woodthrope, *J.R.A.I.*, XI, p. 57; Furness, *J.R.A.I.*, XXXII, p. 445; Butler, *J.A.S.B.*, 1875, I, p. 309.

84. Peal, *J.R.A.I.*, III, p. 477; *J.A.S.B.*, LXIII, III, p. 14; Hutton, The *Angami Nagas*, pp. 351f.

85. See Hutton, *Ibid*; Damant, *J.R.A.S.*, 1880, pp. 228f; Woodthrope, *J.R.A.I.*, XI, pp. 58f.

86. *L.S.I.*, III, II, pp. 155f; Bulter, *J.A.S.B.*, XLIV, pp. 307f.

87. Hutton, *The Angami Nagas*, pp. 6f. 100f; Godden, *J.R.A.I.*, XXVII, pp. 23f.

88. Hutton, *The Sema Nagas*, pp. 6f., 126f.

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groups—Eastern and Western, further sub-divided into exogamous clans.[89] The Āos believe in the common origin of man, tiger and spirit;[90] they are broadly divided into three groups—Chongli, Mongsen and Changki, divided into exogamous phratries and further sub-divided into clans.[91] The Lhota traditions record their migration from various directions; they are divided into two broad groups—Liye and Ndreng, sub-divided into exogamous phratries and further sub-divided into clans.[92] The Yachumis bear close resemblance to the Āos and the Chāngs, and the latter are divided into various groups and exogamous clans.[93] The Sangtāms are divided into two or three groups and clans.[94] The Konyaks have two main divisions—Thendu and Thenkoh, each sub-divided into three clans.[95] Closely allied to them are the Kalyo-Kengyus and the Phom Nagās.[96]

Nagā-Boḍo and Nagā-Kuki sub-groups : Linguistically, in the former group may be included the Kacha, Kabui and Khairao; in the latter, Maram, Tangkul, Maring, Phadang, Yiyangkong, Sopvoma and others, including the Mikirs.[97] All these tribes inhabit parts of Cāchār and Maṇipur; they show, however, both physical and linguistic differences (Table 4), and all of them are divided into various clans. The Mikirs call themselves *Ārleng* (man). Traditions connect them with the eastern portion of the Jaintīā Hills, bordering on the Kapili as their original seat. They have an admixture of Khāsi blood.[98]

Kuki-Lushāi-Meithei tribes and their sub-groups :[99] Old Kuki, in which are included the Hrangkul, Halam, Chaw, Langrong and others; Kuki-Chin, which includes the Meithei,[100] old Kuki and Chin; Northern Chin sub-group, in which are included the Thado, Sokte, Ralte, Paite and

89. Mills, *The Rengma Nagas*, pp. 11f.
90. S. N. Majumdar, *Man in India*, IV, pp. 43f.
91. Mills, *The Ao Nagas*, pp. 13f; Smith, *Ao Naga Tribe*, pp. 49f.
92. Mills, *The Lhota Nagas*, pp. 3f, 87f.
93. Hutton, *The Angami Nagas*, pp. 377f; Mills, *C.R.I.*, 19,31, I III, pp. 144-45.
94. Hutton, *The Angami Nagas*, pp. 357f; Mills, *C.R.I.*, 1931, I, III, pp. 143-44.
95. Mills, *Ibid*, pp. 145f,, Hutton, *Ibid*, pp. 382f.
96. Hutton, *The Angami Nagas*, pp. 382f.
97. *L.S.I.*, I. I, pp. 59f; Watt, *J.R.A.I.*, XVI, p. 353; Brown, *Statistical Account, etc.*, pp. 22f; Soppitt, *A short Account of the Kacha Naga tribe*, etc. pp. 2f; Johnstone, *My Experiences, etc.*, p. 27.
98. Stack and Lyall, *The Mikirs*, pp. 4f, 151f; Stewart, *J.A.S.B.*, XXIV, pp. 604f.
99. *L.S.I.*, I, I, pp. 59f.
100. Hodson, *The Meitheis*, pp. 5f.

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others; and lastly the Central Chin group which includes the Lushāis and other allied peoples.

The Lakhers,[101] occupying the southern portion of the Lushāi (Mizo) Hills bordering on Burma, may also be placed in the same family. Most of these tribes are now occupying parts of Maṇipur, Lushāi (Mizo) Hills, Cāchār and Mikir Hills. Both in physical features and dialects (Table 5) they show marked differences. Most of the Lushāi-Kukis are connected with Burma and Chittagong.[102]

Boḍo Group : The *Boḍo* group includes the most numerous tribes, occupying not only the hills but are also found spread over parts of the valley from Dhubri to Sadiyā. They were once a very dominant people of the valley, and petty kingdoms, like those of the Kachāris and the Chutīās, were established by them even before the intrusion of the Āhoms. Remnants of their political domination, after the extinction of Hindu kingdoms and of their culture, may be noticed from the names of places, particularly rivers, preceded by '*di*' or '*ti*', the *Boḍo* word for water.[103] They have affinities not only with the people of Nepal and Tibet and other Tibeto-Burmans like the Nagās, but also with the Khāsis.[104] The important members of the group are: the Gāros, Kachāris, Chutīās, Rābhās, Koches, Lālungs, Meches, Hājong, Hojāi, Ḍimsā and others; some of them got mixed up with the Shāns at a later time. In spite of their affinities, we find many differences in both their physical features and dialects (Table 6)

The Gāros constitute an important section of the group, and are allied to the Khāsis and Nagās;[105] they are divided into three exogamous divisions: Momin, Marak and Chakma.[106] The Kachāris are divided into plain and hill Kachāris, or Ḍimsās, subdivided into numerous exogamous clans.[107] The Koches are likewise sub-divided into many clans.[108] The Chutīās, who had an admixture of Shān blood, established their kingdom in the Sadiyā region; they are broadly divided into Barāhi and Deorī.[109]

101. Parry. *The Lakhers.*
102. Shakespeare, *The Lushei-Kuki Clans*, pp. 1f; Soppitt, *Kuki-Lushai Tribes*, pp. 1f.
103. Endle, *A.C.R.*, 1881, pp. 67f.
104. Hutton, *A.C.R.*, 1921, III, I, (App. C, pp. XVIIf).
105. Playfair, *The Garos*, pp. 14f. 22f.
106. *Ibid*, pp. 59f; B. Banerjee, *I.A.*, 1929, pp. 121-27.
107. Endle, *The Kacharis*, pp. 3f, 24f; Soppitt, *Kachari Tribe, etc.*, pp. 12f.
108. Risley, *Tribes and Castes of Bengal*, I, pp. 490-92; Dalton, *Ethnology*, pp. 89-92; Waddell, *J.A.S.B.*, 1900, III, p. 48; Playfair, *The Garos*, pp. 19f; *A.C.R.*, 1881, pp. 74f.
109. Endle, *The Kacharis*, pp. 90f; Dalton, *Ethnology*, pp. 77f; Waddell, *J.A.S.B.*, 1900, III, p. 42; *A.C.R.*, 1881, p. 77.

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The Lālungs got mixed up with the Gāros and Mikirs; they have numerous exogamous clans.[110] The Rābhās, Hojāis, Hājongs, Meches and Barās, though had their common *Boḍo* origin, came to be looked upon like the koches as superior to the Gāro or the Kachāri, because, they came under the influence of Hinduism at an early period;[111] all of them have their different clans or septs.[112]

The Kirātas : The *Boḍos* have a close affinity with the *Kirātas* of ancient Indian literature. A consideration of the habitat of the latter is essential, as traditionally the first foundation of a kingdom in Assam is attributed to the *Kirāta* chief Mahiraṅga dānava. The *Kirātas* are also associated with the Bhauma dynasty, particularly with Naraka and Bhagadatta. The classical writers mention them under various names. Megasthenes and Arrian, confirmed by Pliny, mention Chiriotosagi and Skiratai, identified by McCrindle with the *Kirātas.*[113] The *Periplus* calls them Kirrhadae and locates them in the hills of Assam and Burma.[114] Ptolemy's Kirrhadia, the country of the *Kirātas* corresponds to Tripurā, Sylhet and Cāchār according to Gerini.[115] Aelian's Schiratae appear to be the *Kirātas.*[116] The classical writers, therefore, from the 4th century B.C. onwards place the *Kirātas* in South-east Bengal and Western Assam. The Indian sources, particularly the *Epics*, locate them in different parts of India; but most of the sources agree in placing them near the marshy regions in South-east Bengal and the hills of Assam. The *Udyoga* (xviii), the *Sabhā* (xxvi-xxvii), the *Karṇa* and other *Parvans* of the *Mahābhārata* mention them along with the *Cīnas*, forming the followers of Bhagadatta, with yellowish complexion, dwelling in the marshy regions near the sea-shore, that is, in South-east Bengal. The *Kiṣkindhyākāṇḍa* (xl) of the *Rāmāyaṇa* describes them as wearing thick top knots with conical heads, golden in appearance, fair looking and fierce. The *Bṛhatsaṁhitā* (xiv, 18, 29-30) places them in the north-east. The Mongolian affinity and their habitat in the marshy regions and the hills of Assam are also confirmed by the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* (Bk. ii, iii) and the *Kālikā Purāṇa* (38). Manu (x, 43-44) states that they were Kṣatriyas in origin, but became degraded owing to the extinction of sacred rites among them. This is also stated in the *Aśvamedha Parvan* of the *Mahābhārata*. But most of the sources

110. *A.C.R.*, 1881, pp. 76f; Waddell, *J.A.S.B.*, 1900, III, p. 54.
111. *A.C.R.*, 1881, pp. 73f.
112. Endle, *The Kacharis*, pp. 24f, 81f.
113. *Megasthenes and Arrian*, pp. 131f, 171.
114. Schoff, *The Periplus*, p. 253; Taylor, *J.A.S.B.*, 1847, I, pp. 10-11.
115. *Researches on Ptolemy's Geography*, pp. 30-31, 52.
116. See Taylor, *J.A.S.B.*, 1847, 1, pp. 46f.

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agree in stating that an important section of the *Kirātas* lived in South-east Bengal and Western Assam and that they were Mongolians.[117] It is possible that at a later time they, like most of the Tibeto-Burmans, got mixed up with the Alpines who had already settled in Eastern India and Assam. The *Kirātas* represent, therefore, an early wave of Mongolians and might have settled in parts of Assam even before some *Boḍos*; for it is mentioned as early as the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* (1, 3, 7) that it was from the *Kirāta* towns of Eastern India that the Aryans brought the *soma* plant for sacrifice. This points to the early settlement of these people in Assam; that they largely contributed to the culture of Eastern India, is admitted by scholars.[118]

4. Mixture of various strains :

Both anthropometry and ethnography indicate that most of the early inhabitants of Assam had an admixture of different racial strains. When and how this admixture took place is difficult to posit; but it is likely that this happened both before and after their migration and settlement in this land.

Even the Khāsi Syntengs show an admixture of Negrito, Austric, Alpine and Tibeto-Burman elements in varying proportions. As Dixon writes, the Khāsis "are racially closely related to the majority of the Tibeto-Burman tribes. With them they represent a very old western drift of South-east Asiatic peoples, superimposed upon a previous aboriginal Negroid stratum and overlaid by a later wave of Alpine peoples."[119] Hutton noticed among most of the Nagās traces of Negroid, Austro-Asiatic, Alpine, Tibeto-Burman, Ṭāi and a race of southern origin, allied to the people of the Philippines, Borneo and parts of Indonesia.[120] These elements are found among the Āos[121] and some Kukis like the Thados. The practice of ordeal by diving among the latter people is associated with Mon culture, and many of their customs are indicative of Khāsi-Ho cultures of Indonesian affinity and of those of the Pagan Malayans and the Philippines; their custom of burial compares well with that of the people of Sumatra and Philippines. The Melanesians, like some Lushāis, were in

117. Dalton, *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal*, p. 103f.

118. See B. A. Saletore, *The Wild Tribes in Indian History*, pp. 13-25; B. C. Law, *I.C.*, I, pp. 381f; also S. K. Chatterji, who has made a special contribution to the subject in his book; '*Kirāta Jana Kṛti*', 1951.

119. R. B. Dixon, *Man in India*, II, pp. 1-13.

120. Intro. to Mills' *Lhota Nagas*, XXXVII.

121. Intro. to Smith's *Ao Naga tribe*, XII-XV.

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the past used to tasting the blood of their murdered enemies.[122] The Lakhers likewise contain Austric, Nagā and Boḍo blood and some Melanesian and Indonesian strain.[123] Both the Semā[124] and Āngāmi Nagās[125] have an admixture of Mongolian, *Boḍo*, and of elements of the peoples of the Pacific area.

A Dravidian strain coming from Southern India is also suspected among some Nagās. This is confirmed both by archaeology and ethnography. The use of conch-shells and canoes as coffins by some Nagās and other tribes, as in the Pacific area may be connected with the sea and tends to confirm a tradition of their migration by water-routes, like the Karens of Burma who have such traditions of a voyage across the Bay of Bengal from Southern India.[126] Connecting the Austro-Asiatic, Indonesian and South Indian culture, Hutton points out that the origin of this culture is to be attributed to Southern India. The iron age graves of Southern India, he further writes, show signs of affinity with those of the Nagās. The cenotaphs of Southern India resemble those of the Āngāmis. The use of conch-shells as ornaments by the Nagās, which have been discovered also in North Arcot in a dolmen, seems to point to their association with the sea. Some megaliths of the two regions are also similar[127]. Some stone-celts from Vellore resemble the Nagā type. On the basis of such parallels, it is posible to infer that the Nagās contain elements which migrated from Southern India across the Bay of Bengal and via Burma.[128] It is also possible that this element migrated to Assam from India by the land route. Dravidian elements may also be suspected among the Āos.[129] Hutton, however, rightly disputes Perry's theory of the origin of the Nagās, who in his book, '*The Children of the Sun*', holds that the Nagās are connected with a Dravidian family ruling in Assam.[130]

Two elements of the Khāsi culture indicate a connection between them and the Sawaras of Madras and the Nicobarese. It is significant,

122. Hutton Intro. to Shaw's *Thado Kukis*, *J.A.S.B.*, (N.S.), XXIV, pp. 4f, 14 (fn); Codrington, *The Melanesians*, p. 305; Lewin, *Wild Tribes of South Eastern India*, p. 269; *Hill Tracts of Chittagong*, etc., p. 107.

123. Intro. to Parry's *Lakhers*, XIVf.

124. Hutton, *The Sema Nagas*, pp. 379f.

125. Hutton, *The Angami Nagas*, pp. 6f.

126. McMahon, *The Karens of the Golden Chersonese*, pp. 110f.

127. Fergusson, *Rude Stone Monuments*, etc., p. 476.

128. Hutton, *Man in India*, IV, pp. 1-13; *Ibid*, XII, pp. 1-18; *Man*, 1926, pp. 222-24; *Ibid* 1930, p. 81.

129. Intro. to Mills' *Lhota Nagas*, XXXVIII.

130. *Man*, 1927, pp. 128-31.

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in the opinion of Hutton, "that the Sawaras like the Nicobarese and the Khāsis speak a language of the Austro-Asiatic family, and that there are strong traces among some of the Konyak Nagās also not only of an Austro-Asiatic vocabulary, but of cultural elements, such as the shouldered hoe, generally found with the same association". The burial customs of the War of Shella again show striking similarities with those of the Sawaras and the Nicobarese.[131]

Some writers like N.N. Vasu ascribe a Dravidian origin to the families of Naraka and Bāṇa; but we have refuted this assumption in another place.[132] The Dravidian affinities of the Koch-Kachāris have also been pointed out by some writers; Vasu asserts that they are to be connected with the Sumerians and the Dravidians.[133] But his conclusions are not supported by any genuine evidence. H.H. Raisley thinks that the Koch "are a large Dravidian tribe....among whom there are grounds for suspecting some admixture of Mongolian blood....But on the whole Dravidian characteristics predominate among them".[134] Dalton supports Risley's theory.[135] In our opinion, both physical features and customs do not betray anything like a pure Dravidian origin of the Koch or the Kachāri; it may be that like other tribes they have had an admixture of that blood. Waddell, on the basis of anthropometry, has shown that they were Tibeto-Burmans and have no affinity with "the dark Dravidian aborigines of India"[136] In fact, the Dravidian element in Assam's population appears to be comparatively insignificant.

The fusion of the Nagā-Boḍo blood took place at an early period, and though Nagās in particular, had absorbed many Oceanic elements, the common origin of the different Tibeto-Burman tribes may be gathered both from physical features and ethnography. The Semās, for instance, have an admixture of *Boḍo* and Mongolian blood.[137] It was as a result of this fusion that intermediate group of tribes (Nagā-Boḍo) originated. The use of forked posts either of stone or of wood may be taken as an important element of *Boḍo* culture, and with a few exceptions, an element of *Boḍo* origin can be traced in all the Nagā and other tribes using this kind of post. But, as pointed out by Hutton, if the Mon-Khmers and the

131. Hutton, *Man*, 1939, p. 57.
132. See Chap. V, Section I.
133. *Social History of Kāmarūpa*, I, pp. 36f.
134. *Tribes and Castes of Bengal*, I, pp. 490-92; *People of India*, p. 40.
135. *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal*, pp. 89-92.
136. *J.A.S.B.*, 1900, III, p. 48.
137. *The Sema Nagas*, pp. 379f.

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Bodos have been more or less fused, then some such tribes, showing Nagā-*Bodo* affinities may have come out of a fused stock; the erection of forked posts may as well be owing to the presence of the Austric element in the fused races.[138] In any case, we have strong grounds to show Nagā-Bodo fusion.[139] H.E. Kauffman, speaking of the use of a thread-square symbol in the graves of the Āngāmis, Āos, Chāngs, Tangkuls, Lhotas, Thados, Lushāis and the Kachāris, holds that if this element entered the Nagā Hills when the Kachāris were still in the plains then another link will be found between the Nagā and *Bodo* cultures.[140] The practice of lycanthropy among some *Bodos* and Nagās may also be associated with their common origin.[141] Gurdon is possibly right in pointing to close affinities of the Khāsis, Nagās, Gāros and Mikirs.[142]

Most of the tribes, particularly the Nagās, have marked affinities with the people of the Pacific area, from the direction of which some of them entered Assam. This is mainly based on a similar ethnographic survivals, which include the Mon-Khmer speech of the Khāsis, the matrilineal system of the Gāros and Khāsis, exogamy, bachelors' halls of most tribes and shouldered celts, as among the Khāsi-Nagās, ornamented spears, the use of the cross-bow, tattooing, canoe drums and buffalo, the erection of megaliths, the practice of jhuming and terraced cultivation, belief in the theory of soul matter associated with head-hunting, the erection of pile-dwellings, disposal of the dead, etc., all elements of Indonesian culture.[143] The parallels are indicative of a common origin of some Assam tribes and the people of Borneo, Philippines, Nias, Nuzon, Formosa, Polynesia, Melanesia, and other Isles.[144] The very word '*genna*' (restriction) among the Nagās has the same meaning as '*penna*' among the people in the Pacific area, and both have the same mythology concerning the heavenly bodies. The main basis of comparison is found in the use of stone and the belief in the cult of the dead. As among some people of Samoa, Melanesia and others, with the Nagās there is a strong belief in the magical virtue of stones, associated with fertility and head-hunting. The Megaliths of both the areas are strikingly similar and they are associated with the same ideas. The nature of the disposal of the dead, whether connected with

138. *Hutton, J.R.A.I.*, LII, pp. 56f.
139. Hodson, *Naga Tribes-of Manipur*, pp. 17f; Playfair, *The Garos*, pp. 22f.
140. *J.R.A.I.*, LXXXIII, pp. 101-106.
141. Hutton, *J.R.A.I.*, L, pp. 48-50.
142. *The Khasis*, pp, 11-14.
143. Hutton, *Man in India*, XII, pp. 1-18.
144. Peal, *J.A.S.B.*, LXIII, III, pp. 13f; *Ibid*, LXV, III, pp. 13-17; *J.R.A.I.*, XXII, p. 244-61; Yule, *J.R.A.I.*, IX, pp. 290-310; Col. A. Lane-Fox, *J.R.A.I.*, III, pp. 480f.

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the megalithic tombs or otherwise, and the belief in life after death of both the areas show wonderful similarities.[145] E. Evans, commenting on the parallel customs between the Kelabits of Borneo and some Nagās, has shown that this was due to a common origin of their culture.[146] The practice of producing fire with the help of thong, as done in the Nagā hills, is identical with the use of a similar device by the Karens of Burma and some people of Borneo.[147] Pointing to the close affinities of the Nagās with the Annam tribes, Hutton concludes "that they both represent an approximately identical mixture of races and cultures."[148] In fact, of all the people of South-east Asia, the Assam tribes have close ethnic affinities with the people of Burma, whether Mons or Tibeto-Burmans.

5. Caucasic strain :[149]

In discussing the question of the admixture of elements, we have already pointed to the presence of an Alpine element in most of the tribes. This element, like the Aryan, definitely came of the Caucasic stock.[150] A. H. Keane thinks that the people of this stock spread to the confines of South-east Asia in prehistoric times,[151] and subsequently they came down the river valleys of Assam and Burma, where they were confined into the hills and became the ancestors of the Nagās and other allied tribes.[152] All through the uplands of South-east Asia, therefore, from Tibet to Cochin-China this Caucasic admixture is noticed,[153] as among some Nagās.[154] Keane places the Nagās, Mishmis, Khāsis, Lushāis and others in the Tibeto-Burman family of what he calls the Homo-Mongolians;[155] and to account for their special features, he states that the Mongolians in Central Asia were in contact with peoples of the Caucasic stock since the

145. Hutton, *Man in India*, IV, pp. 1-13; F. M. Schnitger, *Forgotten Kingdoms in Sumatra*, pp. 150f; 162f, 191f; Hutton, *J.R.A.I.*, LVIII, p. 406.

146. *Sarawak Museum Journal*, IV, 4, 1937, pp. 411-437.

147. H. Balfour, *Man*, June, 1926, pp. 101-103.

148. *Man in India*, II, pp. 158-59

149. Among the Caucasic stock are included the Mediterranean, the Nordic and the Alpine: (A. H. Keane, *Man—Past and Present*, pp. 438f; W. Z. Ripley, *The Races of Europe*, 1900, p. 437.)

150. H. C. Chakladar, *Man in India*, XVI, pp. 183-89; S. C. Roy, *Ibid*, XIV, pp. 273f.

151. *J.R.A.I.*, IX, p. 259.

152. Smith, *Ao Naga tribe*, pp. 174f.

153. Keane, *Man—Past and Present*, pp. 186f; *Ethnology*, pp. 152f, 326.

154. Smith, pp. 154f, 165; Keane, *Ethnology*, pp. 326f; *Man—Past and Present*, pp. 186f; Furness, *J.R.A.I.*, XXXII, pp. 445f; Hodson, *Naga Tribes of Manipur*, p. 6; Butler, *J.A.S.B.*,XLIV, pp. 310f; Dalton, *Descriptive Ethnology*, pp. 8f.

155. *Man—Past and Present*, pp. 193f; *Ethnology*, pp. 300f.

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neolithic age, and it was there that the admixure took place.[156] It is, therefore, quite possible that from this contact some Nagās and other groups absorbed a Caucasic strain;[157] this admixture might have taken place both before and after the migration of the Tibeto-Burmans to Assam.

This Caucasic strain is found among the Āos,[158] Āngāmis, Maṇipuris and Mishmis. Hutton noticed Aryan features among the Āngāmis, whose definitely Mongolian features "may be seen side by side with a straightness of eye and nose that might be purely Aryan."[159] The Maṇipuris are "a fine stalwart race, descended from an Indo-Chinese stock with some admixture of Aryan blood, derived from the successive waves of Aryan invaders that have passed through the valley in prehistoric days."[160] Though with Mongolian features, some Mishmis show Aryan types, and they have a tradition to account for this Aryan admixture.[161] Relying on this tradition of *Paraśurāma*, who is said to have settled Brāhmanas near the Sadiyā region in the *Brahmakuṇḍa*, N.N. Vasu contends that these Brāhmaṇas became degraded because of the curse of *Paraśurāma*, and came to be known as the three families of Mishmis, two of Ābars and one of Dafalās and Miris each. He, therefore, asserts that these four tribes originated from the Vedic Brāhmaṇas.[162] This theory is absurd, and it is equally wrong to believe that *Paraśurāma* settled Brāhmaṇas near the present *Paraśurāmakuṇḍa*.[163] The Dafalās, as described by Robinson, have Aryan feature, which "frequently passes into near approach to the Caucasian."[164]

The above instances indicate that either before their migration or in course of their settlement in this land, some of the Tibeto-Burman tribes absorbed Caucasic blood. The following treatment will throw more light on this question of Caucasic migration.

6. The Problem of Alpine—Aryan migration :

The existence of an Alpine element is noticed as early as the Indus Civilisation.[165] In order to explain the theory of the inner and the outer

156. *Man—Past and Present*, p. 268.
157. Smith, *Ao Naga tribe*; p. 174.
158. *Ibid*, pp. 154f.
159. *The Angami Nagas*, pp. 20f.
160. Johnstone, *My Experience in Manipur*, etc., p. 97; Brown, *Statistical Account*. etc., pp. 28f; Watt, *J.R.A.I.*, XVI, p. 350; Hodson, *Meitheis*, p. 2.
161. Dalton, *Ethnology of Bengal*, p. 18.
162. *Social History of Kāmarūpa*, I, pp. 84f.
163. K.L. Baruna, *E.H.K.*, pp. 22-23.
164. *J.A.S.B.*, XX, p. 129.
165. Marshall, *Mahenjodaro and Indus Civilisation*, II. p. 643; *Vedic Age*, I, pp. 193f.

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band of the Indo-Aryan languages, Hoernle and others have surmised two waves of Aryans; one of them is believed to have come earlier than the Vedic Aryans.[166] There are scholars who believe that the Aryans did not enter India from outside.[167] But the weight of evidence points to the common origin of the Aryans, both Indian and European and their original habitat is believed to have been somewhere in Southern Russia.[168] It is also certain that they entered India through the north-western route, and the date of their first footing in India may roughly be set about the second millennium B.C. It may be noted as well that the term Aryan in its original sense means a linguistic denomination rather than an ethnic family, though in course of time the two came to be identical.[169]

The question of the first entry of the Alpines is difficult to determine, but, as aptly remarked, "there is every good reason for supposing that between the end of the Mahenjodaro Civilisation.....and the entry of the Rig-Vedic Aryans, the Indus Valley was subjected to an invasion of Alpines from the Pamirs."[170] They, showing *bracycephalic leptorrhine* features, may, therefore, have arrived in India before the Vedic Aryans, and contributed, partly atleast, to the Aryan culture.[171] This view of the earlier migration of the Alpines is supported by Haddon,[172] T.A. Joyce,[173] and others. That a branch of them entered the Punjab is proved by the Indus Valley finds; another branch might have passed towards the east and become the ancestors of the non-Mongoloid *bracycephales* of Eastern India, speaking languages of the outer band, such as Bihāri, Oriyā, Bengali and Assamese. So the writers like Hutton, Hoernle, B.S. Guha, and others strongly support the theory of the coming of the Alpines before the Vedic

166. *Comparative Grammar of the Gaudian Languages*, p. XXXI; also *Crierson, L.S.I.*, I, I, pp. 116f.

167. Sankarānanda, *Rig Vedic Culture of the Prehistoric Indus*, I, I, pp. 71f; S. V. Venkateśvara, *Indian Culture through the Ages*, pp. 15-16.

Some scholars again cling to the theory that the Aryans were the authors of the Indus Civilisation and that the Vedic Civilisation is even older than the former. (See also G. N. Jha, *D. R. Bhandarkar Com. Volume*, pp. 1-2).

168. See Howell, *Soul of India*, p. 28; G. Childe, *The Aryans*, pp.166f; S. K. Chatterji, *Indo-Aryan and Hindi*, pp. 13f; also *Camb. History of India*, I, pp. 64-76; Isaac Taylor, *The Origin of the Aryans*, pp. 5-7; Max Muller, *Science of Language*, I, p. 289.

169. See S. K. Chatterji, *Indo-Aryan and Hindi*, pp. 13f; also Winternitz, *History of Indian Literature*, p. 255; *Vedic Age*, I, pp. 200f.

170. *C.R.I.*, 1931, I, I, pp. 368, 445f.

171. B. N. Datta, *J.D.L.*, XXVI, pp. 78f; M. M. Chaudhuri, *C.R.* June, 1945.

172. *Races of Man*, pp. 60f; *The Wanderings of Peoples*, p. 27.

173. *J.R.A.I.*, 1912, pp. 467f.

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Aryans, more or less allied to the Irānians.[174] R.P. Chanda, on the basis of anthropometry and ethnography, contends that these so-called Aryans of the outer provinces were not Aryans at all and that these round-headed invaders might have come later than the Vedic Aryans.[175] This theory of the non-Vedic origin of the Brāhmaṇas, Kāyasthas and other higher classes of Eastern India like those of Gujarāṭ may be supported, but his theory of the intrusion of the round-headed so-called non-Aryans or Alpines subsequent to the Vedic Aryans,[176] is no longer tenable for the reasons stated above.

Vedic literature speaks of Eastern India as '*Anupadeśa*' or the land of the *Vrātyas*, who were perhaps the Alpines or the non-Vedic Aryans. N.N Ghose has tried to trace the origin of this *vrātya* culture to the Aryan speaking Magians or Irānians, allied to the Alpines.[177] The settlement of the Alpines in Eastern India and Assam is supported not only by the presence of *bracycephalic leptorrhine* features among the higher classes but also by the fact that in these areas the Austric and Dravidian speech were long superseded by the Aryan speech of the Alpines, who also introduced certain cultural traits, whose survivals may still be noticed in Assam. The Mediterranean-Aryan culture of the Punjab and Madhyadeśa, after the coming of the Aryans probably got mixed up with the Alpine-Aryan culture of Eastern India and the result was a Neo-Aryanism.[178] The contributions made by the Alpines to Eastern India were considerable; but their original impress on languages, faith and customs were largely modified by the Aryan-migration and contact, with the result that their cultural trends in course of time became indistinguishable from those of the Aryans.[179]

The association of the names of Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa with magical practices and planetary worship strongly suggest the *vrātya* culture of the Alpines, having remarkable affinities with those of the Magians of Irān.[180] Even the Assamese language contains some common words of Irānian and Indo-European origin, which do not occur in Vedic Indian, and it may be shown that it has close affinities with those of the outer provinces

174. On Indo-Irānian relations, their common home in the Pāmir region and their subsequent separation (see Ernst Herzfeld, *Iran in the Ancient East*, pp. 190f; *Vedic Age*. I, pp. 218f; *Vedic Index*, I, p. 505.

175. *Indo-Aryan Races*, pp. 59,70

176. *Ibid*, pp. 162, 189.

177. *Aryan Trail in Irān and India*, pp. 214f.

178. See N. N. Ghose, *Indo-Aryan Literature and Culture* (Origins), pp. 40f.

179. See K. L. Barua, *I.C.*, III, pp. 161-171.

180. Spooner, *J.R.A.S.*, 1915, II, pp. 433-36.

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of India, and must have been derived from a common *piśāca* language, introduced by the Alpines. To cite a few instances, the Assamese word '*batar*' has its similarity in meaning and phoneticism with 'weather' in English and 'wetter' in German; the word, '*ba'gā*' (white) has its equivalent in Slavonic, 'bogu'; '*kāllā*' (cow calf) in Assamese has its equivalent, 'kalb' in German and 'calf' in English. To cite a few cultural parallels, the disposal of the dead in the Assam valley by exposure in the past may be associated with the same Magian-Irānian practice and its introduction by the Alpines; so also is the practice of lighting a fire by the side of the dead before and after cremation and the period of uncleanliness of women, observed during their menstruation.

Both anthropometry and ethnography, therefore, seem to confirm our view that the higher classes of Assam and Bengal had a different origin, probably Alpine of a priestly class. The close affinities of these people of Eastern India with those of the other outer provinces in India, suggest their common Alpine origin and show strong grounds for believing that their so-called *vrātya* culture, associated with the *mlecchas*, designated as such by the Vedic Aryans, had the same Alpine origin. B. S. Guha has shown that the Brāhmaṇas and Kāyasthas of Bengal, Telegu Brāhmaṇas, Oriyā Brāhmaṇas, those of the Kenarese country, Nāgar Brāhmaṇas of Gujarāṭ and the Khos of Citral are basically of the same stock as the early Aryans or Alpines. Epigraphic evidence of Nāgar Brāhmaṇas and Kāyasthas, with their surnames *datta*, *deva*, *dhara*, *nandi*, *sena*, *vasu*, etc., both in Western India, particularly in Gujarāṭ and in Eastern India, as found among the donees of the Nidhanpur grant of Bhāskara of the seventh century A. D., points to the influence of the Alpines in Kāmarūpa. D. R. Bhandarkar has noticed affinities of the Brāhmaṇas and Kāyasthas of Eastern India with the Nāgar Brāhmaṇas of Gujarāṭ, Bombay and Kāthiāwāḍ on a similarity of such surnames. The Nāgars, associated with the worship of *Hāṭaka* Śiva, are said to have lived originally in the Nāgarī-Korsum near the Mānasa lake to the east of Kaṅgrā and Kāśmīra and then migrated to Nāgarkoṭ and westward to Kāśmīra and spread subsequently over different parts of India.[181] This view is supported by other writers.[182]

The presence of Nāgar Brāhmaṇas and Kāyasthas in Eastern India, Bengal, Assam and elsewhere, does not require to be explained on the

181. *I.A.*, XL, pp. 32f; *Ibid*, LXVI, pp. 41-45, 61-72.

182. J. C. Ghosh, *I.H.Q.*, VI, pp. 67-71; *A.B.O.R.I.*, XVII, pp. 385-86; Ghurye, *C.R.I.*, 1931, V, I, pp. 471f; Risley, *Tribes and Castes of Bengal*, I, p. 21. (App. I); *Ibid* II, pp. 1f; J. C. Ghosh, *I.C.*, I, pp. 507f.

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basis of traditions, referring to their origin and migration from Kāśmīra Gujarāṭ or Mithilā. It may be explained by the common origin of the Alpines, who were already present in Eastern India, even before Bhūtivarman in the 6th century A. D. made a land-grant to some Nāgar Brāhmaṇas and Kāyasthas. This seems to explain the racial affinity of the priestly class of the same ethnic stock.

Early Irānian-Magian settlements in Eastern India, in regions like Videha, Magadha and Prāgjyotiṣa, are pointed out by Spooner, who holds that Prāgjyotiṣa was a Magian settlement, associated with planetary worship, and that its king Bhagadatta, had the same origin.[183] Whether or not there is a truth in his thesis of the Zoroastrian period of Indian history,[184] the presence of the Alpines, allied to the Irānians, and the establishment of their kingdoms in Eastern India, cannot be doubted. It is possible, as shown by some early Brāhmaṇical works, that even the rulers of the Bimbisāra-Śaiśunāga dynasty and Janaka of Videha were not pure Aryans, but must have been Alpines, like those of the *Bhauma* family of Assam. The epithets, '*asura*' and '*mleccha*' of these rulers can be explained on the ground that they were neither pure Aryans nor Mongolians but Alpine-Irānians.[185]

Once we agree that the Alpines settled in Eastern India long before the Mongolians, and were followed by the Aryans, the next important question to be decided is the intrusion of both the Alpines and Aryans into Assam. While the Alpines are believed to have entered through the north-west, an alternative route through the north and the Assam-Burma route is also possible. It is wrong to cling to the theory that all the immigrants entered India only through the north-west.[186] We have discussed the possibility of the spread of the people of the Caucasic stock to South-eastern China during prehistoric times to explain that strain among some Assam tribes. The possibility of the migration of peoples in prehistoric times through the north via Tibet and Nepal also is pointed out by some writers.[187]

The theory of the entry of the Alpines and the Aryans into Assam seems to centre partly round the origin of the Kalitās, who, we believe,

183. *J.R.A.S.*, 1915, II, pp. 333-36.
184. See K. P. Jayaswal (*J.B.O.R.S.*, II, pp. 97-104) who disputes Spooner's theory.
185. See K. L. Barua, *J.R.A.S.*, IV, pp. 37-53; *I.C.*, III, pp. 161-71.
186. See N. N. Ghose, *Indo-Aryan Literature and Culture (Origins)*, p. 31 (note).
187. See B. Sahani, The Himalayan Uplift since the Advent of Man, *Current Science*, V. (No. 2), 1936.

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had an Alpine origin.[188] No published Assam epigraph, however, mentions the Kalitās; but both early Indian and classical sources seem to point to their early settlement in Assam. We have shown elsewhere that Hecataeus's references to Kakatiai[189] and that of Herodotus to Kalatiai,[190] mean the Kalitās. If Benfey is right in deriving the gold coin '*kaltis*', mentioned in the *Periplus*, from the Kalitās,[191] it may be held that these coins recall the ruling family of the Kalitās, probably of Bhagadatta. Ptolemy's Kodutai, derived from the *Koluta*,[192] may also stand for the Kalitās. Pliny's reference to Colubae beyond the Ganges in the east, who are identified with the Kolutas,[193] may mean the Kalitās. Indian literature, including the *Epics*, the *Purāṇas* and the *Mūdrārākṣasa* refer to the *Kolutas* and on the basis of their geography, it is possible to identify them with the Kalitās.

The importance of the Kalitās in the scheme of the ancient Assamese culture is well-known[194] and their culture represents one of the oldest in Northern India.[195] The origin of these people is still a subject of speculation. B.K. Kākati believes that there were early settlements of the Kalitās near about Sadiyā (Kalitā deśa). This assumption is based on the genealogy of the ancestors of Gopāl Ātā.[196] J.B. Neufville locates the Kalitās in the same area and points to their ancient and high civilisation.[197] Dalton thinks that they were the earliest Aryan colonists of Assam,[198] and were not Koch as held by Hodgson.[199] Waddell thinks that they were "the mixed descendants of the Indian Kāyasthas".[200] Robinson makes them the spiritual guides of the Koch, whose position is believed to have been degraded by the advent of the Brāhmaṇas; he supports Waddell's theory of the Kāyastha origin of the Kalitās.[201] A purely Aryan Kāyastha origin

188. See K. L. Barua, *J.A.R.S.*, VI, pp. 67-71; *I.C.*, III, pp. 161-71.
189. McCrindle, *Ancient India as described in Classical Literature*, Intro., XIV.
190. *Megasthenes and Arrian*, p. 6 (f.n.)
191. See McCrindle, *The Commerce and Navigation of the Erythrean Sea*, p. 31.
192. Gerini, *Researches on Ptolemy's Geography*, p. 356.
193. McCrindle, *Megasthenes and Arrian*, pp. 131f.
194. K. R. Medhi, *J.A.R.S.*, III, pp. 75-88; *Assamese Grammar*, XXVf.
195. N. K. Bhattasali, *I.H.Q.*, XXII, pp. 245f.
196. *Mother Goddess Kāmākhyā*, pp. 59-64; B. Rajkhowa, *Short Account of Assam*, p. 7; *Kalitā Jātir Itivṛitta*, pp. 4f.
197. *Some Frontier Tribes of the North-East Border of Assam*, p. 11: (*A. Res*, XVI, pp. 344-45.)
198. *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal*, pp. 79f, 321f.
199. *Aborigines of India*, p. 141.
200. *J.A.S.B.*, 1900, III, p. 49.
201. *Descriptive Account of Assam*, pp. 262-63.

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of these people is uncertain, and equally wrong is the contention of Hamilton that they inter-married with the Koch.[202]

The common belief is that the Kalitās or their ancestors entered India from the west, settled in Upper India, and ultimately entered Assam, and that they were Kṣatriyas.[203] The same Kṣatriya origin is ascribed among others by A. C. Agarwalla, R. K. Bardoloi[204] and L. N. Bez Barua.[205] In the opinion of K. R. Medhi, they were not Kṣatriyas, but entered Assam before the Vedic Aryans and were non-Vedic Aryans. They entered, in his opinion, either through the west or the north, possibly the latter route.[206] The presence of the non-Vedic Aryans in Assam is pointed out by a number of writers,[207] and it is believed that the Assam valley was Aryanised long before Central and Lower Bengal.[208] To explain the name *kalitā*, a theory of a '*kulalupta*' (concealment of caste) is invented by some. The story is connected with the legend of Paraśurāma, in order to save themselves from whose wrath, the Kalitās are said to have concealed their Kṣatriya caste. This may have a bearing on the Brāhmaṇical reaction against Buddhism, which the Kalitās might have adopted at the time. S. C. Goswami holds the same *kulalupta* view and asserts that they were high class Kṣatriyas. The writer quotes from the *Śānti Parvan* of the *Mahābhārata* (49) in support of his theory. He states further that many ancient Indian literary works make references to a class of people called *Koluta*, *Kuluta* or *Kolta*, and of a country called *Kuluta*. According to the Purāṇas (*Brahmāṇḍa*, 49; *Vāmana*, 13; *Padma*, 3; *Garuḍa*, 55) the *Kolutas* were living at the foot of the Himalayas and some of them were known as *vrātya* Kṣatriyas. In the *Karṇa Parvan*, a king of the *Kolutas* is said to have fought against the Pāṇḍavas. *Kolutas* or *Kulutas* are mentioned in the *Harṣacarita*, the *Mūdrārākṣasa* and other works. Goswami concludes that the *Kulutas* once inhabited the foot of the hills from Kāśmīra to Assam and that the Kalitās of Assam were their desecendants.[209] The association of the Kalitās with the *Kolutas*, as with the Buddhist Koliyas, appears almost certain, but this does not determine the racial origin of the former, except their doubtful Kṣatriya connection.

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202. *Account of Assam*, p. 54.
Some writers connect them with the Buddhist Kṣatriyas of the Koliya tribe. (See B. C. Law, *Some Kṣatriya Tribes in Ancient India*, p. 90; Kākati, *Kalitā Jātir Itivṛitta*, p. 43).
203. See G. K. Talukder, *J.A.R.S.*, 1936, pp. 109f.
204. *Assam Pradīpa*, I, (No.2).
205. *Bāñhī*, XIV, I, p. 27.
206. *J.A.R.S.*, III, pp. 75-88.
207. See S. C. Goswami, *J.A.R.S.*, 1934, p. 161.
208. *E.H.K.*, p. 23.
209. *J.A.R.S.*, 1933, p. 68f.

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B. K. Kākati elsewhere associates the Kalitās with the south. He refers to the existence of such people in Cuttuck and Sambalpur, who, according to traditions, migrated from Baudh and whose ancestors were water carriers. There are also *Koltas* in the Tons valley in Nepal.[210] Kākati finds similarity between Kalitā and *Kābatika* of the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* (xlv, 128) and *Kariti* (*Bhīṣma Parvan*, ix, 44) and points to "the original southern habitat of the Kalitās". He finds support for his contention on certain cultural affinities between Assam, Bihar and the south.[211] But cultural affinities between States may have nothing to establish as regards the southern original home of the Kalitās, only a section of the people of Assam. R. M. Nath goes a step further and derives the Kalitās from the Kal-tons (stone workers), originally migrating from Southern India.[212]

As we have noted, the connection of the Kalitās with the *Kolutas* is possible; but their actual origin has been left unexplained by most writers. The existence of the peoples with similar names in Sambalpur, Orissa and Nepal does not require to be explained on a theory of the origin and migration of the Kalitās to Assam from these regions. If they represent a wave of the Alpines or even the early Aryans, most likely the former, it is certain that they were the torch-bearers of the *vrātya* culture of Eastern India. Anthropometry also possibly indicates the Alpine origin of the Kalitās.[213] While the theory of a route of their migration through the west is tenable, an alternative route through the north and the Assam-Burma route, is perhaps supported by the existence of a people with Caucasic strain or allied people in Nepal and the Sadiyā region. On a study of their physical traits and ethnography, it appears almost certain that they originated from the Alpines of a priestly order, allied to the Nāgars of Gujarāṭ and Kāyasthas of Bengal. The Kalitās of Orissa or Sambalpur may be the descendants of such people from Assam, or it may be that these were different colonies of the same people. That they originated from a priestly class, is shown by the fact that till recent times, as provided under the Vaisnava system of Assam, they acted as priests in converting some peoples to Hindusim. In all appearance, the Kalitās stand for an ethnic type rather than a caste.[213a] If the Alpines were the early wave of the Aryans, the theory of the early migration of the Kalitās,

210. E. C. Mobbs, *Indian Forester*, IX. pp. 663-799.
211. *N.I.A.*, II, pp. 332-39.
212. *Background of Assamese Culture*, pp. 45f, 63f.
213. See Waddell, *J.A.S.B.*, 1900, III.

It is true, however, that no large-scale measurement of such peoples has yet been taken, and such measurement may not now yield expected results.

213a. This is supported also by the fact that Moggalāna, one of the two disciples of the Buddha, belonged to a village of the Kolitā clan : (E. J. Thomas, *The Life of Buddha*, pp. 94-95)

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cannot be discarded; but it seems to us that the Kalitās and the Alpines, though allied to the Irānians, were not pure Aryans at all and that they might have migrated to Assam from various directions. Shortly after the coming of the Vedic Aryans, the Kalitās of Alpine origin, though they kept their distinct identity for some time, became mixed up with the former, and, therefore, they were regarded as Aryan Kṣatriyas. We, therefore, conclude that most of the Kalitās of Assam came of a fused Alpine-Aryan race and whatever traces of the Aryan settlements are found in north-eastern part of the State, may be attributed chiefly to the Alpines, who subsequently might have come under the Aryan influence.

When and how the pure Aryans entered Assam from the west, is uncertain. We have noted that the early Vedic literature speaks of Eastern India as a *mleccha* country[214] and does not seem to refer to the introduction of the Aryan culture into Assam.[215a] But both the *Aitareya* (i, 3, 7) and the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇas* (i, iv, i, 14-5) preserve traditions of the migration of the Aryans to the east of the *Sadānīrā* or the *Karatoyā*, the western boundary of Ancient Assam.[216] The reference here is to the pre-Buddhistic period.[217] The antiquity of the Aryanised name Kāmarūpa, which finds mention in the *Gopatha Brāhmaṇa* and that of Prāgjyotiṣa, which occurs in the *Śāṅkhyāyana Gṛhyasaṁgraha* (ii, 38) and the *Ramāyaṇa* (*Ādikāṇḍa*, 35; *Kiṣkindhyākāṇḍa*, 42), not to speak of the *Mahābhārata*, also points to the early migration of the Aryans. The important mention of the *Lauhitya Brāhmaṇas* in the *Nikāyas* (*Dīgha Nikāya*, i, 224; *Saṁyutta, Nikāya* iv, 117),[218] associated in other works with the *Udayācala* or Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa, also preserves an early tradition of the introduction of the Aryan culture into the land. Kauṭilya's reference to Aryanised place names like *Suvarṇakuḍya*, *Pāralauhitya*, etc., from Kāmarūpa in connection with economic products,[219] also points to the conclusion that during the Maurya period an Aryan wave entered the land. The *Bṛhatsaṁhitā's*[220] reference to Prāgjyotiṣa and the *Lauhitya*,

214. See Dikshitar, *I.H.Q.*, XXI, pp. 29f; D. R. Bhandarkar, *A.B.O.R.I.*, XII, pp. 103-116.

215. This theory does not hold good now. The internal evidence of the Vedic literature itself points definitely to the Aryanisation of Eastern India including Assam during the Vedic period, and also proves that some *Ṛṣis*, the composers of certain Vedic texts, hailed from this region : (see H. C. Chakladar, *Aryanisation of Eastern India.*)

215a. J. Eggeling, *S.B.E.*, XII, Intro., pp. XLIf. 104f; Weber, *Indian Studies*, I, pp. 170f. For a different view (*Vedic Index*, II, p. 422).

216. See Chapter III.

217. Dikshitar, *I.H.Q.*, XXI, pp. 29-33.

218. See B. M. Barua, *I.H.Q.*, XXIII, pp. 203-205.

219. See *Arthaśāstra*, Bk. II, Chapter XI.

220. Kern, *Intro. to the Bṛhatsaṁhitā*, p. 32.

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based on the geography of the *Parāśara Tantra* of the first century A. D.[221] has an important bearing on the entry of the Aryans. From the 4th-5th century A. D. we have a number of sources like the *Raghuvaṁśa*,[222] Yuan Chwang's accounts,[223] and the *Purāṇas*, which definitely point to the settlement of the Aryans, at least in the Brahmaputra valley.

Most of the literary works associate the earliest rulers of Prāgyotiṣa, like Naraka and Bhagadatta with the settlement of the Aryans. The *Kālikā Purāṇa* (38) states that Naraka was not only anointed as a Kṣatriya but also that he was responsible for the settlement of the Aryans in the land. Dikshitar, referring to the story of Naraka and his death in the hands of *Kṛṣṇa*, writes that after Naraka's death Prāgjyotiṣa was taken as a part of *Aryyāvarta* from the time of the *Epics*, and it resulted in the fusion of pre-Aryan and Aryan cultures in the land.[224] D. R. Mankad takes Naraka as the first Aryan ruler of Assam,[225] which is most unlikely. The *Hara-Gaurī Saṁvāda* associates Bhagadatta with the settlement of hundreds of Brāhmaṇas in Kāmarūpa and the same credit is given to Jitāri.[226] Speaking of Bhagadatta's association with the *Mahābhārata* war, N. K. Bhattasali contends that the introduction of Aryan culture into Assam may be dated about 1500 B. C.[227] The existing sources do not support his contention and, moreover, this date seems to be too early for the *Mahābhārata* war, if not for the entry of the Aryans into Assam.

We have already discussed the probable Alpine origin of the family of Naraka-Bhagadatta, who later on may have come under the Aryan influence. We do not rely upon the legend, connecting Naraka with *Kṛṣṇa* and his divine origin as a result of the Boar incarnation of *Viṣṇu;* we have also rejected Bhagadatta's participation in the *Mahābhārata* war and have tried to show that he probably flourished in

221. H. C. Chakladar, *Studies in Kāmasūtra*, p. 72.

222. IV, 81-84.

223. Watters, II, pp. 185f. The existence of hundreds of *Deva* temples in Kāmarūpa, dedicated evidently to Aryan deities during the 7th. century A. D., as remarked by Yuan Chwang, is in itself a good testimony to the spread of the *Āryyadharma* in Assam.

224. *I.H.Q.*, XXI, pp. 29-33.

It has been rightly pointed out (A.D. Pusalker, *Vedic Age*, I, p. 312) that during the *Tretā* Age, the Aryan occupation extended further east and embraced, in addition to the territories already occupied in the *Kṛta* age, Orissa, Assam and other countries.

225. *J.A.R.S.*, X, pp. 14-22.

226. *Chaps*. VI-VII.

227. *I.H.Q.*, XXII, pp. 245-52.

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the first century A. D. But, whatever the origin of Naraka and whatever the truth in his association with *Kṛṣṇa* or Janaka of Videha, it is almost certain that he came under the influence of the Aryans. The Naraka episode in the *Kālikā Purāṇa* may represent an attempt of some Aryan chief of Videha to spread Aryan culture in Assam.[228] Bhagadatta was likewise responsible for the settlement of the Aryans. This is indicated even by his Aryanised name. We, therefore, dispute the contention of B. M. Barua[229] that Naraka-Bhagadatta had no hand in the Aryanisation of the land. In fact, the entry of the Aryans might have begun from the time of the Vedic literature, *Brāhmaṇas* and the *Epics*.

On the basis of epigraphy we have discussed elsewhere the introduction of Aryan culture. Beginning at least with the 6th century A. D., it became the systematic policy of the rulers to create *agrahāra* settlements for the Brāhmaṇas, and this royal policy was largely responsible for the settlement of the Brāhmaṇas and other high class Aryans in the land. As a result of the spread of this Aryan culture, Kāmarūpa, as shown by the accounts of Yuan Chwang, became a noted centre of Brāhmaṇical learning, and Kāmarūpa Brāhmaṇas were honoured with similar donations of lands outside the kingdom. Though probably of Alpine origin, many rulers contributed to the Aryanisation of the valley and became responsible for the Hinduisation of some tribes. The process started by them continued working throughout the period, so much so that even some petty Tibeto-Burman rulers, as heirs of the Hindu kings, adopted Hindu culture and came to be looked upon as Kṣatriyas; the example set by them was followed by their subjects. The impress of the Brāhmaṇical culture of Assam was felt not only in the neighbouring places of India, but it was also carried, under the patronage of its rulers, to distant places, like Burma and South-east Asia.

7. Assam and South-east Asiatic regions :

Beginning with the foundation of the political dynasty in Assam, a cultural stream was probably carried from this land to distant lands, and we find historical references to the foundation of coloines in South-east Asia by emigrants from this side of India.[230] Though the weight of evidence indicates that South-east Asia was colonised chiefly by people emigrating from Southern India, a few people may have gone there through

228. See J. K. Miśra, *J.A.R.S.*, 1944, pp. 3f.
229. *I.H.Q.*, XXIII, pp. 200-220.
230. See P. C. Bagchi, *India and China*.

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Assam-Burma route. On the basis of Chang Kien and other sources, we have already pointed to regular trade routes leading to China and South-east Asia through this Assam-Burma route. The foundation of colonies and political kingdoms in Burma and the neighbouring lands from the side of Assam is evidenced by many early sources.[231] Gerini rightly points out that right from the Brahmaputra and Maṇipur to the Tonkin Gulf we have a continuous chain of States ruled by princes of Indian origin.[232] The commercial and cultural relations between India and China through the Assam-Burma route, as we have alredy examined, are also pointed out by the *Periplus* and Ptolemy's Geography, confirmed by the accounts of Yuan Chwang.

Two routes of emigration, one by land through Assam-Burma and the other reaching Indo-China by sea through the Bay of Bengal, therefore, have been suggested by writers on the subject of Indian colonisation of South-east Asia. It has been found that the Indian colonists proceeded to these regions through East Bengal and Assam and established colonies not only in Burma but also in the valleys of the Chindwin, the Irrawaddy, the Salween, the Mekong and the Red River as far as Yunnan. To the east of the hills bordering on Maṇipur there was the Hindu kingdom of Ta-tsin; about 150 miles further east, beyond the Chindwin, was another kingdom just to the north of Ngan-si. In Yunnan was the kingdom of Nan-chao or Tali. The whole of Upper Burma was colonised by the Indians who established kingdoms at Prome, Pagan, Tagaung and other places. Similar kingdoms existed in Laos, in Central Indo-China. The colonists, proceeding by sea established kingdoms in Arakan, Lower Burma, Malaya Peninsula, Siam, Cambodia, Cochin China and Annam on the main land, and in the islands of Sumatra, Java, Borneo and Bali in the East Indies.[233]

Gait points out that an "Indian king Samuda, who according to Forlong was ruling in Upper Burma in 105 A.D., must have proceeded thither through Assam and so must the Hindus who led the Tchāmpās or Shāns in their conquest of the mouths of the Mekong in 280 A.D."[234] It is possible that Samuda belonged to a ruling family in Assam. The kingdom of Champā is said to have been established by a Hindu king, Śrī Māra

231. See *History of Assam*, p. 9; Phayre, *History of Burma*, pp. 3f.

232. *Researches on Ptolemy's Geography*, pp. 125f; also R. C. Majumdar, *Hindu Colonies in the Far-East*, pp. 12f.

233. R. C. Majumdar, *Hindu Colonies in the Far East*, pp. 12-13, 226-27; *Ancient Indian Colonies in the Far East*, I. *Campā* (Intro.).

234. *History of Assam*, p. 9.; also Phayre, pp. 3, 4 and 15.

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in the second century A.D.[235] Śrī Māra, as pointed out by Finot, is a restored reading. It is suggested that the name is identical with the *Saumārapīṭha* and the dynasty of the same name in Assam.[236] But it is doubtful, because the name *Saumārapīṭha* had a later origin under the Tāntrik system. Many Hindu dynasties are associated with the name of *Kauṇḍīnya*. The Chinese History of the Liang Dynasty (A.D. 502-556), referring to the founder of the dynasty in Bali, states thus: "The king's family name is Kauṇḍīnya and he never before had any intercourse with China—The king uses a texture of flowered silk wrapped round his body."[237] The Hindu kingdom of Cambodia, called Fu-nan in Chinese is said to have been established by one Huen-tien about the first century A.D. Majumdar thinks that the name stands for Kauṇḍīnya.[238] Towards the end of the fourth or the beginning of the fifth century A.D., the throne was occupied by one Kiao-chen-ju or Kauṇḍīnya. The history of the Liang Dynasty states that *Kauṇḍīnya* was a Brāhmaṇa and an inhabitant of India.[239] It is significant that there is one *Kuṇḍīna* near Sadiyā in Assam. It is possible that the founders of the dynasties in Bali and Cambodia or Kambuja were Brāhmaṇas from *Kuṇḍīna; Kauṇḍīnya* is, however, a gotra name[240] and it occurs in the Nidhanpur grant of Bhāskara.[241] The *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* preserves traditions of the rulers of *Kāmarūpakula*, who were ruling in the Indian Archipelago and Further India from early times.[242] We have no details about their accounts; but it is possible that the rulers were related to the kings of Kāmarūpa. They were probably Alpine Brāhmaṇas like the kings of Bali, Cambodia and other places.[243]

These stray references indicate that both politically and culturally the ancient "history of Kāmarūpa seems inseparably connected also with the ancient history of Burma, Arakan and Further India, as with different countries in India, including the Deccan."[244] If not politically, at least culturally, the ruling dynasty of Assam had important links with the people of South-east Asia, and exerted its influence over them by sending out emigrants. N.N. Vasu is right in suggesting that "the influence of the

235. *Hindu Colonies in the Far East*, p. 99.
236. K. L. Barua, *J.A.R.S.*, VII, pp. 57f.
237. *Hindu Colonies*, pp. 22-23. The founder of a dynasty in Borneo about the 4th century A.D. was also *Kauṇḍīnya:* (*Hindu Colonies*, p. 21).
238. *Hindu Colonies*, p. 155.
239. *Ibid*, p. 157.
240. Vasu, *Social History of Kāmarūpa*, III, pp. 142-44.
241. The Last Plate.
242. Ed. T. G. Śāstrī, VV 636-640; K. P. Jayaswal, *The Imperial History of India*, p. 32.
243. K. L. Barua, *J.A.R.S.*, VII, pp. 57-63.
244. B. M. Barua, *I.H.Q*., XXIII, pp. 200-220.

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Bhauma dynasty had made itself felt in distant Burma before it began to spread in Eastern India. The origin of the grand architectural memorials of the Śaivas which still exist in Kambhoja or Cambodia and Aṅga (Mahā Champā) or Anam should be traced to the Brāhmaṇic ascendancy which was firmly established by the Śaiva kings of the Bhauma dynasty."[245] With the migration of the Ṭāi (Āhoms) people, who established their kingdom in Assam in the beginning of the thirteenth century A.D., Assam's connection with the South-east Asiatic region came to be well-established.

8. Conclusion :

In spite of the fact that Assam received various racial elements, including the Alpine-Aryans, this ancient land remained predominantly, as now, a land of Tibeto-Burmans of the Indo-Chinese stock. This is evident at least on linguistic grounds. Assamese, which was not fully developed in the ancient period, is now the only Indo-Aryan language; but the Austric and Tibeto-Burman elements have largely contributed both to the language and to the culture of Assam. Though the process of Hinduisation of the non-Aryan tribes went on from early times,[246] the converts were very few and the State remained, therefore, a land of heterogeneous racial strains with linguistic divergences, notwithstanding the fact that modern Assamese language has occupied the place of a vehicle of expression of a composite Assamese civilisation. The opinion of B.K. Barua, however, that "Assam should be racially and linguistically homogeneous, that is to say, its inhabitants form a distinct entity among the peoples of India, united by a common tongue, an Aryan dialect of great antiquity,"[247] does not find justification from the existing facts. At no period of history has Assam been culturally homogeneous, and the present state of affairs, we believe, points in the other direction. New light will be thrown on this problem of Assam's complex cultures by a more systematic and thorough study of the racial elements, based on further more scientific field work.

Our curiosity is raised not so much by the effects produced and contributions made by the different elements as by the question of how at different periods of Assam's history the land became a refuge of so many peoples. In fact, Assam is one of the few places in India, which may be "looked upon as a federation hall, where the most ancient and the most modern, the most antiquated and the most up-to-date, are found to meet together upon terms of perfect cordiality. The followers of all the schools

245. *Social History of Kāmarūpa*, III, p. 59.
246. Gait, *History of Assam*, pp. 8f.
247. *Cultural History of Assam*, I, p. 3.

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of philosophy —the Vedic, the Paurāṇic and the Tāntrik have thrived here equally well; and people of all races, Aryans and non-Aryans, Hindus and non-Hindus, have equally contributed to the building up of the social fabric of Kāmarūpa. In a word, with the ancient history of this glorious land is indissolubly bound up the social, religious and the national history of the whole of India."[248] The spirit of independence of the various elements may be taken as one of the contributions, made to Indian culture, and the complex Assamese culture, composed of the same elements, has got a stamp of independent character, which added one more thread to the texture of Indian civilisation, characterised by its unity in diversities.[249]

248. N. N. Vasu, *Social History of Kāmarūpa*, I, pp. 1-2.

249. S. K. Chatterji, in his recent contribution: *The Place of Assam in the History and Civilisation of India* (G. U., 1955), has made a rapid survey of the subject, and though the book is informative to some extent, some of his views do not appear to be well-established.

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CHAPTER V

POLITICAL HISTORY

SECTION 1

THE PERIOD OF TRADITIONAL ACCOUNTS AND EARLY HISTORY

1. Introduction—Dānava and Asura dynasty :

The political history of Ancient Assam, associated with the rulers of Prāgjyotiṣa and Kāmarūpa, is wrapped up with legends. We are attempting at finding a connected history of the period, which can be relied upon to a certain extent. The accounts are not so scanty as confused and scattered, and the main difficulty lies in the absence of archaeological corroboration. We must, however, try to forge a connecting link between this obscure period and the beginning of the truly historical one. The association of some of the early rulers with Prāgjyotiṣa, (the name of both the capital and the kingdom, an Aryan or Aryanised name, which finds mention as early as the *Śāṅkhyāyana Gṛhya Saṁraha*[1] and the *Rāmāyaṇa*,)[2] is a clear indication of the contact of Aryan and non-Aryan cultures from early times. The legends apparently depict the history of a period, when the so-called non-Aryan chiefs came under the influence of the Aryans.

The legends, connected with political history, begin some time before Naraka, and, if they are to be believed, the period began with the *Kirāta* chiefs of Mongolian affinity, having probably an admixture of Alpine blood; because the foundation of the *Kirāta* rule took place at a time when the Alpines may have already settled in Eastern India. We have already dealt with the origin and habitat of the *Kirātas* elsewhere. The earliest king was a demon, Mahirangadānava, who had his capital at Mairanka. The name suggests an Aryanisation of some Austric formation, with "*ong*", meaning water. The probable historical character of the chief seems to be indicated by the existence of a hill, *Mairaṅkaparvata* in Beltolā near modern Gauhāti; but how and when the kingdom was established are not known. He was succeeded by Haṭaka, Sambara, Ratna and Ghaṭakāsura who is said to have been killed by Naraka with

1. *Chapter*, II, 38.
2. *Ādikāṇḍa*, 35.

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Kṛṣṇa's help, when Naraka established a new line in Prāgjyotiṣa. Bhagadatta followed him, succeeded by Dharmapāla, Kāmapāla and others ruling for 19 generations. Then came a king of another dynasty, founded by Mādhava, who came from the west, and whose son Lakṣmīpāla invaded Gauḍa. His son Subāhu is said to have retired to the Himalayas and was succeeded by his minister Sumati, followed by others including 21 kings. Then came a Kṣatriya, named Jitāri from the *Drāviḍa* country, who took the name of Dharmapāla and brought to Assam several families of Brāhmaṇas and Kāyasthas from Kanauj and Gauḍa. His son Vatupāla, Satānika or Ratnapāla invaded Gauḍa and was succeeded by his son Somapāla. This dynasty ruled for 8 generations, the last being Rāmacandra whose son Śaśāṅka or Ārimatta became the ruler of the four *pīṭhas* and raised a rampart in Vaidargarh. He was killed by Pheṅguā who in turn, was killed by Ārimatta's son Gajāṅka, who was succeeded by Śukrāṅka and Mṛgāṅka. Ārimatta's descendants ruled for four generations, and with the death of Mṛgāṅka, the kingdom was divided into many parts. This, in brief, is the kernel of the accounts given in the *Hara-Gaurī saṁvāda* and other manuscripts.[3]

2. The family of the Bhauams :

It appears from the accounts that the *Dānava* dynasty of the *Kirāta* chief Mahiranga was put on end to by Naraka, who established himself in Prāgjyotiṣa after killing Ghaṭaka.[4] Before examining the details connected with the origin of Naraka, the reference to some of which has already been made, we must consider the historicity of the *Bhauma* dynasty on the basis of records. We must admit that nothing definite may be gathered about the history and chronology of Naraka from the said source. The Doobi grant (vv. 2-4) refers to Naraka, Bhagadatta and Vajradatta. The Nidhanpur grant (vv. 4-5) states that Naraka, the chief of the rulers of the earth, was the son of *Viṣṇu*, who, assuming the form of the Boar, lifted up the earth, and from whom was born Bhagadatta, the friend of *Indra*, who challenged the latter in battle and who was famous for his conquests. The Tezpur grant (vv. 3-6) refers to Naraka and his two sons, Bhagadatta and Vajradatta. The Nowgong grant (vv. 3-8) states that Naraka was the son of *Viṣṇu*, who deprived *Indra* of his glory and stole away *Aditi's* jewels and who, having conquered Prāgjyotiṣa, took up his residence there. His son Bhagadatta was an unique hero, whose younger brother was Vajradatta. The Bargāon grant (vv 3-8) mentions Naraka, Bhagadatta

3. S.K. Bhuyan, (ed) *Kāmarūpar Burañjī*, pp. 1-5.; *Assamese Historical Literature*, 1929.
4. *Kālikā Purāṇa*, Chaps. 36-42; *Yoginī Tantra* (Calcutta ed.), p. 81.

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and Vajradatta. The same reference occurs in the Gauhāti grant (vv 5-8); but here Vajradatta is made the son of Bhagadatta. The Khonāmukhi, the Śubhaṅkarapāṭaka and the Puṣpabhadrā grants of Dharmapāla bear the same evidence. As we have stated, the epigraphs may have recorded only the long established traditions and may not prove the historicity of Naraka; but, that the *Bhauma* dynasty was founded by some chief cannot be doubted, and the evidence is important in the sense that all the rulers of the historical period trace their connection with the same dynasty.

Regarding the origin of Naraka, we have suggested his Alpine origin and his subsequent association of the Aryan culture. The *Kālikā Purāṇa* itself refers to the establishment of the Aryans by him. It further states that Naraka, being brought up in Videha, was regarded as a Kṣatriya and that Gautama, the priest of Janaka, performed the *Keśavapana* ceremony of Naraka according to Vedic rites. He is also said to have been well-versed in the Vedas and devoted to the duties of the twice-born.[5] Some writers like N.N. Vasu [6] ascribe a Dravidian or Phoenician origin to Naraka and his dynasty; but this theory is improbable. K.L. Barua also contends that Kāmarūpa was probably a Dravidian kingdom about the time of the *Mahābhārata* war, and that the rulers of the dynasty of Naraka were Dravidian, like the *Aikṣvākus* of Ayodhyā and the *Janakas* of Videha.[7] He finds support for his contention in a tradition that Naraka was the worshipper of the phallus in the temple of Kāmākhyā.[8] We have discussed the origin of the cult elsewhere; the worship of the phallus in the temple of Kāmākhyā may be associated with some pre-Aryan Austric culture,[9] developed later on into the cult of *Śakti*, and this does not prove the Dravidian origin of Naraka. It is yet to be proved whether Naraka, whose name is associated with the introduction of the *Devī* worship in Kāmākhyā,[10] was the same as Naraka, associated with Janaka. Barua himself admits that "as the earliest Aryan colonists in Assam were the Kalitās, the kings of the Naraka line were probably Aryan Kalitās. Whatever may have been the actual origin of Naraka and his descendants, there is no doubt that the Brāhmaṇas extolled them as Aryan Kṣatriyas and made them perform the various caste ceremonies, usually observed by Kṣatriyas." [11] It is reasonable to hold that, as the Kalitās were the Alpines with

5. *Kālikā Purāṇa*, 38.
6. *Social History of Kāmarūpa*, I, pp. 121f.
7. *E.H.K.*, pp. 25f.
8. *Ibid*, pp. 29f.
9. See B.K. Kākati, *Mother Goddess Kāmākhyā*, pp. 35f.
10. *Ibid.*
11. *E.H.K.*, pp. 25f.

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an admixture of Aryan blood, Naraka had the same origin. [12] It is unlikely that the first political dynasty, established in Assam, was a Dravidian one.

It is equally absurd to suppose a purely Mongolian domination of Assam during this early period, when the Tibeto-Burmans could hardly establish themselves in the land. The evidence of such a domination and rule, as indicated by the survival of the remnants of their language and culture in the names of places and rivers, [13] is to be attributed to a later period, just prior to the coming of the Āhoms. The rule of the *Kirātas*, established by Mahiraṅga, belongs certainly to an earlier period and it did not amount to more than the foundation of a small principality; while the dynasty of Naraka that followed it can reasonably be called the first political dynasty in Assam.

Besides the *Kālikā Purāṇa* and the *Yoginī Tantra* (I/12), other works make profuse reference to Naraka. The *Kālikā Purāṇa*, giving the genealogy of the family, states that Naraka made the *asura* Hayagrīva his commander-in-chief and appointed *Muḍu* to defend Prāgjyotiṣa. He married *Māyā*, the daughter of the king of Vidarbha, defeated *Indra* and took away *Aditi's* ear-rings. Kṛṣṇa subsequently killed him and installed Bhagadatta on the throne. [14] The *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* relates how Kṛṣṇa killed *Muḍu* and Naraka. [15] The same reference is found in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*.[16] The association of Naraka with the Boar incarnation of *Viṣṇu* and the king of Videha, who is said to have adopted him has, however, made the question a difficult one. The *Varāha* incarnation episode is certainly a myth and this, therefore, is to be explained in conjunction with the reference made in the *Kiṣkindhyākāṇḍa* of the *Rāmāyaṇa* (xlii) to the location of the city of Prāgjyotiṣa in the *Varāha* mountain, where Naraka is said to have taken his abode. [17] Explaining the origin of Naraka out of this incarnaiton, B.M. Barua contends that Naraka or the Narakas were autochthones, born of *Bhūmi* or in a place lying adjacent to the *Varāha* peak of the Himālayas.[18] But the *Varāha* peak is not on the Himālayas.

12. See E. Gait for different views about the origin of Naraka: (*History of Assam*, pp. 12f.).
13. *Ibid*, pp. 6f; also Chapter on Cultural History.
14. *Kālikā Purāṇa*, 38-42; also *Harivaṁśa*, 63-64.
15. *Chapter* XXIX.
16. *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (Calcutta ed) .X.
17. There are many references to Naraka in the *Mahābhārata*: (*Vana*, 142; *Udyoga*, 48; *Droṇa*, 28).
18. *I.H.Q.*, XXIII, pp. 200f.

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It stands for the hills of the same name lying contiguous to Kāmākhyā, extending over to Pāṇḍu, the shores of which are washed by the water of the mighty Brahmaputra (*agādha-varuṇālaya* of the *Rāmāyaṇa*). This is confirmed by the *K.P.* (62/74).

The association of Naraka with the mountainous regions is also indicated by other sources. The *Varāha Purāṇa* states that in the Himalayan region there was a temple of *Kokāmukhasvāmin*, dedicated to *Viṣṇu*. The *Brahma Purāṇa* (vv. 114-115) states that Naraka, who was born as a result of the union of *Viṣṇu* with *Mahī* and *Chāyā*, and was made the ruler of Prāgjyotiṣa, was born in the *Kokāmukhatīrtha*.[19] But, the existence of such a place is doubtful, and the Epic evidence is more authentic. So, this, along with the evidence from the *Kālikā Purāṇa* indicates that Naraka was born in some hilly region of *Varāha*, mentioned above.

It is significant that Naraka is associated with the kingdom of Videha which also very likely formed part of the Alpine-Iranian culture in Eastern India.[20] Explaining his association with Janaka, D. R. Mankad contends that Naraka was either the adopted son of Janaka or his irregular son through Bhūmi.[21] But the explanation is unlikely. As we have stated, the *Varāha* incarnation is a myth: it possibly recalls the story of Naraka's birth in the hilly region of *Varāha*, and his association with *Bhūmi* indicates the high antiquity of his Alpine origin. In any case, if Naraka was the contemporary of Janaka, he flourished during the period of the *Rāmāyaṇa*.

Another difficulty arises from the fact that Naraka is associated with both *Rāma* and *Kṛṣṇa* in the *Kālikā Purāṇa*, and is made to rule from the end of the *Tretā* to the *Dvāpara Yuga*, which is absurd. It is, therfore, suggested that Naraka, like Janaka,[22] was a dynastic title and that he belonged to the latter's family.[23] But the Naraka of his time and, therefore, that of *Rāma* was certainly different from the Naraka, killed by Kṛṣṇa.[24] The virtuous and wicked character of the person, as given in the same Purāṇa, cannot possibly refer to the same Naraka. The first Naraka, who came under the influence of Aryan culture and introduced *Devī* worship, was different from Naraka of the latter part of the story. The

19. See H.C. Chaudhury, *B.C. Law Volume*, Pt. I, pp. 89-90.
20. See Spooner, *J.R.A.S.*, 1915, II, pp. 433f,
21. *J.A.R.S.*, X, pp. 14-22.
22. H.C. Raychaudhuri, *P.H.A.I.*, pp. 36f.
23. *J.A.R.S.*, X, pp. 14f.
24. See Kākati, *Mother Goddess Kāmākhyā*, pp. 25f.

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latter might have been the last Naraka who took to non-Aryan habits and was called an *asura* or a *mleccha;* he is associated also with Bāṇa of *Śoṇitapura* (modern Tezpur). He may have been so called by the compilers of the Purāṇas, because of his inclinations towards Buddhism.

The story of the association of Naraka with Bāṇa is given in a number of sources besides the *Kālikā Purāṇa* (39). The story of Bāṇa gives another interesting episode in connection with the marriage of his daughter Uṣā with Aniruddha, grandson of Kṛṣṇa.[25] He is said to have been a great devotee of *Śiva* and traces his origin from *Marīci, Kāśyapa, Hiraṇya-kaśipu, Prahlāda, Virocana* and *Bali*. The origin of Bāṇa again is controversial. *Śoṇitapura* is located by N.N. Vasu somewhere in Sind, and Bāṇa is said to have come to Saumāra in Assam and established the Saumāra dynasty, having a Dravidian-Sumerian origin. It is further held that it was through the Saumāra dynasty of Bāṇa that phallic worship was established in Assam.[26] We shall show that none of Vasu's contentions is tenable. Kṣemendra in his *Abhidhānacintāmaṇī*[27] mentions *Devīkoṭa, Uṣāvana, Koṭīvarṣa* and *Śoṇitapura* as other names of Bāṇapura. On the basis of Cunningham's report,[28] D.R. Bhandarkar locates Bāṇa's capital in North Bengal (Dinājpur).[29] But the *Śāntiparvan* of the *Mahābhārata* (chap. 399, vv 90-9) locates Bāṇa's capital as being contiguous with Prāgjyotiṣa. The association of Naraka's capital with that of Bāṇa also indicates that their kingdoms were contiguous. P. Bhattacharya points out that Bāṇa's kingdom might have extended from Assam to North Bengal.[30] In any case, it is wrong to suppose that the Saumāra dynasty and *Śoṇitapura* existed somewhere in Sind and Bāṇa's family ruled there. Phallic worship might have been introduced in Assam by the Austric and other non-Aryan elements, and the credit should not entirely be given to the Dravidians. The name *Saumāra* can hardly be attributed either to Sumerian or Dravidian origin. It is associated with the *Saumārapīṭha* of the *Tantras* of a much later time. If Bāṇa was a contemporary of Naraka or at least of the last Naraka, and, therefore, of Kṛṣṇa, the association of both the rulers may be explained on the assumption that Bāṇāsura was also another non-Aryan, or probably an Alpine chief who founded another kingdom in *Śoṇitapura*, modern Tezpur and took to non-Aryan habits. There is no reason to believe that Naraka's taking to non-Aryan habits (it may not

25. *Viṣṇu Purāṇa, Bks.* I, XXI, V, XXXII-XXXIII; *Śrīmadbhāgavatam*, X, 62.
26. *Social History of Kāmarūpa*, I., pp. 100-103.
27. *Abhidhānacintāmaṇi*, IV, V 977; also *Trikāṇḍa*, II, 197.
28. *A.S.I. Report*, XV, p. 95.
29. *A.B.O.R.I.*, XII, pp. 103f.
30. *J.A.S.B.* (N.S.) V., pp. 19-20.

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have been actually so) was all due to the evil influence of Bāṇa. The historical character of Bāṇa seems to be indicated by the remains of *Agnigarh*, *Agniparvata* and other remains in Tezpur, associated with his name, [31] as is that of Naraka by the existence of a village *Narakāsurgāon* near Gauhati as well as by the *Asurar-āli*. It is likely that like Narakas there were also Bāṇas. [32] The theory of the existence of more than one Naraka seems also to explain to some extent the gap between the successors of Naraka and the founder of the Varman line of kings in the fourth century A.D. The historicity of both Kṛṣṇa and Janaka is no longer disputed, as they find mention in the later Vedic literature like the *Upaniṣads*. Though most of the legends about them may not be reliable, it is evident that they flourished during the pre-Buddhistic period. To the same age possibly belong Naraka or the Narakas, and it is likely that Bhagadatta was the son of the last Naraka, if the name Bhagadatta itself was not adopted as a dynastic title. [33]

There is nothing to doubt that Bhagadatta is an Aryanised name. It is also possible that he was an Alpine chief, associated with the Iranian-Magian culture. [34] The historicity of the prince can be proved by a number of sources. He is significantly mentioned in almost all the chapters of the *Mahābhārata* and made to participate in the *Mahābhārata* war, fighting on the side of the Kurus. As given in the *Sabhā Parvan*, he was the friend of Kuru and a mighty warrior. In the *Udyoga Parvan*, he is said to have been equal in contest with Arjuna. In the *Sabhā Parvan* again, he is designated as *Śiva's* friend and not inferior even to *Indra* in battle. The same source and the *Udyoga Parvan* refer to his troops of *Cīnas* and *Kirātas*, glittering with gold and dwelling in the marshy regions near the sea, i.e., in South-east Bengal and Western Assam. It is suggested that before the Kuru-Pāṇḍavas came to prominence, Jarāsandha, who is described in the *Ādi Parvan* of the *Mahābhārata* along with Bhagadatta as an *asura* in his previous birth, established his sway in Magadha, and among his vassals figure Vāsudeva of Puṇḍra and Bhagadatta of Prāgjyo-

31. *J.A.S.B.*, V, pp. 19-20
32. *J.A.R.S.*, X, pp. 14-22.
33. *K.S.*, Introduction, pp. 2-3 and footnotes.

B.K. Kākati thinks that Naraka flourished during the fourth century A.D. He refers to a verse in the *Kālikā Purāṇa* (39/33) where in it is stated that when Naraka established his power, the name of the kingdom was changed from Prāgjyotiṣa to Kāmarūpa, and the latter does not find mention earlier than the fourth century A.D.: (*Mother Goddess Kāmākhyā*, p. 30). This conclusion is, however, not well established. We do not rely so much on the Paurānic evidence. The origin of the name Kāmarūpa goes back to the *Gopatha Brāhmaṇa*, and, moreover, Naraka is more associated with Prāgjyotiṣa than Kāmarūpa.

4. See Spooner, *J.R.A.S.*, 1915, II, pp. 433f.

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tiṣa. The Pāṇḍavas, in order to raise Yudhiṣṭhira to the status of a *samrāṭ*, had to deal first of all with Jarāsandha, and when they started their *digvijaya* some petty chiefs of Northern India voluntarily submitted to them. Among the states joining their *samrājya* are mentioned *Chedi*, *Magadha*, *Puṇḍra*, *Tāmralipti*, and *Suhma* (West Bengal) including Prāgjyotiṣa. Bhagadatta, though at first an ally of the Pāṇḍavas, had to join the confederacy formed against them, it is stated, because of his marriage alliance with the Kurus, and the Pāṇḍavas found in him a formidable warrior. In the *Sabhā Parvan* (xxvi-xxvii) he is said to have been defeated by Arjuna after a fight lasting for eight days. The *Udyoga Parvan* (xviii) states that he, with his followers, the *Cīnas* and the *Kirātas*, went to help Duryodhana. The *Droṇa Parvan* (xxvi-xxx) refers to his exploits and courage, and tells how he rescued Duryodhana from the clutches of Bhīma and how he was at last killed by Arjuna. Not only the *Mahābhārata*, but also other works like the *Kālikā Purāṇa*, *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, the *Harṣacarita* [35] and the *Rājataraṅgiṇī* make important allusion to his career.

What became of Kāmarūpa after Bhagadatta's death is uncertain. It is suggested that his immediate successors came under the political supremacy of the successors of the Pāṇḍavas and subsequently of Magadha after the extinction of their rule. The *Kālikā Purāṇa* (40) mentions four sons of Naraka : Bhagadatta, Mahāśirṣa, Madavān and Sumāli, but records already referred to, mention the name of Vajradatta after Bhagadatta. The *Harṣacarita* mentions Puṣpadatta and Vajradatta after their ancestors. In the *Karṇa Parvan* (v) there is a mention of certain Kṛtaprajña, the son of Bhagadatta, who is said to have been killed in the war by Nakula: (*Bhagadatto-suto rājan Kṛtaprajño mahāvalaḥ Nakulena nipātitaḥ*). In the same epigraphs there is no mention of these princes except Vajradatta, who in the *Aśvamedha Parvan* (lxxv-lxxvi) is said to have fought three days with Arjuna. The same reference is found in the Doobi, Nidhanpur and Gauhāti grants. But it is uncertain whether Vajradatta was either the son or brother of Bhagadatta; because while in the inscriptions of Bhāskara, [36] he is mentioned as his son, in those of Vanamāla, [37] Balavarman, [38] and Ratnapāla, [39] he is called the brother of Bhagadatta. It is more probable that Vajradatta was the son of Bhagadatta like Puṣpadatta. It also appears that the other three sons of Naraka did not rule. If Puṣpadatta

35. *H.C.* (Cowell), p. 217.
36. Doobi grant, V 4; Nidhanpur grant, V 5; Gauhāti grant. V 8.
37. Tezpur grant, V 6.
38. Nowgong grant, V. 8.
39. Bargāon grant. V 8.

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is identical with Kṛtaprajña of the *Karṇa Parvan* of the *Mahābhārata*, [40] it is evident that he died as a prince, and Vajradatta succeeded Bhagadatta.

3. Traditions about other families :

The genealogy of the rulers after Vajradatta is conflicting. According to one account, [41] Bhagadatta was succeeded by Dharmapāla, Kāmapāla and others extending for 19 generations with 24 or 25 kings, mentioned by the initial letters of their names. The account given in another manuscript states that Bhagadatta was followed by Dharmapāla and Candrapāla, whose son was Ārimatta who had three daughters, Dharmāvatī, Avanti and Jayantī. This source has rather mixed up rulers of different families; for Ārimatta, as we shall show, belonged to a different family. Epigraphs give a list of rulers of the Pāla line after the family of Śālastambha. Some chronicles give a list of 17 Pāla rulers, such as Jayantapāla, Cakrapāla, Bhūmipāla, Premapāla, Pakṣapāla, Dakṣapāla, Candrapāla, Nārāyaṇapāla, Madhupāla, Indrapāla, Siṁhapāla, Kṛṣṇapāla, Supāla, Gandhapāla, Mādhavapāla, Śyāmapāla and Lakṣmīpāla who is said to have been succeeded by Subāhu and his minister Sumati. The account seems to have mentioned certain princes of the family of Jitāri before the family of Mādhava, succeeded by Jitāri and his followers, the Pālas and others. These kings may have belonged to different families, but at least some of of them are to be identified with the Pālas of the inscriptions.

One tradition makes Subāhu to have been born in the 19th generation from Naraka, and he is said to have retired to the Himalayas. He was succeeded by his son Suparuā, followed by a minister, who killed Suparuā. We shall show that Subāhu, who fought with one Vikramāditya, belonged to the line of Mādhava who came from the west.

The *Yoginī Tantra* mentions one king named Deveśwara, who was a *Śūdra*, and who is said to have ruled in Kāmarūpa at the commencement of the Śaka era. He is said to have propagated the worship of Kāmākhyā.[42] The identification of this prince is doubtful.

The same work mentions one *Nāgaśaṅkara* of the Nāgākhya line who is said to have been born of the *Karatoyā* in about A.D. 378 and founded a dynasty, which lasted for 400 years. His capital was above the Nāgaśaṅkara temple at Pratāpagarh in Viśvanāth. Muslim sources, however, mention a king named Saṅkal or Saṅkaldib from the country to the east

40. See *K.S.* (Intro), pp. 10-11; *E.H.K.*, p. 35.
41. See *Hara-Gaurī-Saṁvāda*, chaps. VI-VII.
42. See *Kāmarūpar Burañjī*, App. C, pp. 135-36.

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of the *Karatoyā* or Kāmarūpa, who is said to have overthrown one Kidar Brāhmiṇ, a ruler of Northern India. Other sources also refer to the same event.[43] One Afrasiab of Turan or Scythia is said to have defeated Saṅkal. On the basis of Firdusi, A. Salem writes that Saṅkal is associated with the adventure of Bahram Gaur, a Persian ruler.[44] Kidar Brāhmiṇ is identified with Kidar Kushān Shāh of Gandhāra and placed in the fourth century A.D.[45] The death of this Saṅkal again is attributed to Rustam. Bahram Gaur may have been Bahram III, and it appears that the Kushan Satrap of Gandhāra aided Bahram III.[46] If Saṅkal may be placed in the 4th century A.D., he may be identical with Nāgaśaṅkara who as a feudatory of the Guptas might have fought with Gandhāra. In any case, nothing definite can be gathered either from the Assamese chronicles or the Muslim sources about his kingdom and successors and what relationship he bore to the other ruling families. He was probably a minor chief ruling in some part of Western Assam.

According to another account, Jitāri, who is said to have come from the *Drāviḍa* country, was succeeded by Suvalī, Padmanārāyaṇa, Candranārāyaṇa, Mahendranārāyaṇa, Gajendranārāyaṇa, Prāṇanārāyaṇa, Kṣovanārāyaṇa and Rāmacandra.[47] Prasiddhanārāyaṇa's *Vaṁśāvalī* states that Rāmacandra was the 14th in descent from Jitāri. Hannay, on the basis of certain traditions, identifies Jitāri with Dharmapāla and holds that his kingdom was in Central Assam and the dynasty became extinct with Śukrāṅka.[48] The identification, as we shall show, is hardly tenable.To follow the narrative, one Ārimatta is said to have been born of the princess of the house of Rāmacandra. According to the *Vaṁśāvalī* of Prasiddhanārāyaṇa, he ruled at Vaidargarh. In the opinion of Guṇābhirām Barua, he was of the Nāgākhya line, and he further holds that the tradition also ascribes the foundation of Vaidargarh in Betna in Kāmarūpa to Pheṅguā.

A number of traditions centre round Ārimatta, and it appears that he was an important ruler. The genealogy given in the *Dīpikāchanda* of Puruṣottama Gajapati,[49] mentions a number of rulers including one

43. *Dowson Elliot History of India*, VI, p. 533; also *History of Rise of the Mahammadan Power in India* (Tr. J. Briggs, I, 1908, pp. LXIX-LXX).
44. *Riyāz-us-Salātin*, p. 56.
45. See D. Neog, *J.A.R.S.*, VII, pp. 1-4.
46. K.L. Barua, *J.A.R.S.*, VI, pp. 37-53; *Ibid*, VII, pp. 4-5.
47. See *J.A.S.B.*, IX, II, pp. 766 f; Gait, *J.A.S.B.*, LXII, I, pp. 268f.
48. *J.A.S.B.*, 1848, p. 464.
49. See H.C. Goswami, *Descriptive Catalogue of Assamese Manuscripts* (No. 42)

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Haravinda whose capital was at Candraprabhā on the *Lohita*. He was succeeded by his son Kuśaraṅga and had his capital at Ratnapura, and he is said to have ruled in Kāmarūpa, Gauḍa, Magadha and Jaintīā. It also refers to a king, Śrūtasena, the ruler of *Saumārapīṭha*, whose wife was Candrāmati and whose capital was at Manapura on the Brahmaputra. The genealogy of the Rājās of Ḍimaruā[50] states that one Somapāla of Pratāpapura married Harmatī who, being united with the Brahmaputra gave birth to Ārimatta. In one of his exploits he is said to have killed his father, and in order to atone for his sin, he went to *Brahmakuṇḍa* ; but the dead body of his father had to be cremated somewhere near Sadiyā and subsequently he visited the *kuṇḍa* with his father's ashes. The people of Pratāpapura along with another son of Somapāla went to Ḍimaruā and settled there. The account given in the *Bhūñyār-Puthi* states that Ratnapura in the Mājuli was founded by one Raṅga and one of his descendants, Aṅga was killed while fighting in the *Mahābhārata* war. Yudhiṣṭhira and his descendants are said to have ruled in Kāmarūpa down to Pratāpa, who was succeeded by his son Mayamatta in Ratnapura, who had two sons, Ārimatta and Nāgamatta and a daughter. Mayamatta's kingdom was divided between his two sons, and in the western part Ārimatta's minister, Samudra built the city of Viśvanāth. Mayamatta was killed by Ārimatta while he was hunting. Ārimatta then placed his minister in charge of the kingdom with Manohara, the son of the minister at Viśvanāth and after his pilgrimage Ārimatta drowned himself in the Dikhau river. The minister and his son ruled for some time in Viśvanāth and thereafter, the latter's daughter, Lakṣmī, who had two sons Śāntanu and Sāmanta, both having twelve sons and each reigning for some time.

According to another tradition, Mayūradhvaja of the race of *Śiva* ruled the territory between Viśvanāth and Suvaṇśrī and had his capital at Ratnāvatīpura. His son Tāmaradhvaja followed him, who was succeeded by Pratāpapurīya, who married Harmatī, daughter of Haravinda, a descendant of Irābhaṭṭa of Saumāra and as a result of her union with the Brahmaputra, Ārimatta was born at Viśvanāth, who extended his kingdom to Bhutan and Nepal, till at last he killed his father and committed suicide. By another tradition, Ārimatta is said to have been defeated and killed by Pheṅguā who built a fortification, called Pheṅguāgarh in the Dhamdhamā mouza in Kāmarūpa.[50a]

50. See Gait, *Report on the Progress of Historical Research in Assam*, 1897.
50a. There are also Buddhist traditions centering round the name of Ārimatta.

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Ārimatta is also known as Śaśāṅka, whose son Ratnasiṁha or Gajāṅka killed his father's murderer, Pheṅguā. In the Sāhāri mouza in Nowgong are the remains of a fort, known as Jaṅgalgarh, attributed to Jangalvalāhu, another son of Ārimatta. He is said to have been defeated by the Kachāris and drowned himself in the Kalang river. It may be that Ratnasiṁha, Jaṅgalvalāhu and Gajāṅka stand for the same person. Gajāṅka was succeeded by Śukrāṅka and Mṛgāṅka, with whose death, Kāmarūpa was divided into many parts.

Before entering into the question of the identification of the rulers of the various accounts, we make a brief reference to the kingdom of Bhīṣmaka of the Sadiyā region in the extreme north-eastern corner of Assam. There are many archaeological remains in the area, some of which are attributed to Bhīṣmaka and Śiśupāla.[51] The story of Bhīṣmaka and his daughter Rukmiṇī is narrated in the *Bhāgavata* and the *Viṣṇu Purāṇas*.[52] It is also mentioned in the *Rukmiṇī-Haraṇa* of Śankaradeva. The story relates how, in spite of the fact that Rukmiṇī had her betrothal with Śiśupala, *Kṛṣṇa* came there and married her. It is strange as well as significant that *Kṛṣṇa* came such a long way to a distant place like Sadiyā for the daughter of Bhīṣmaka. Bhīṣmaka's capital is located in a place where a colony of the Kalitās is believed to have settled. The story about Kṛṣṇa's exploits may be a myth, but that there was a prince of the name of Bhīṣmaka is quite possible. He was probably a king from the *Kalitā deśa*.[53] The story may have its origin in the invasion of distant Kāmarūpa by some Aryan prince during his time or at a time when Naraka flourished and was, therefore, associated with *Kṛṣṇa*.

4. Four main families—their identification :

To examine the accounts given in the chronicles, we divide the rulers into four main different families, though the fact remains that there were probably other minor chiefs ruling in different parts of the country at different times and even contemporaneously with the main families. The families are those of Naraka-Bhagadatta, Mādhava, Jitāri, and Ārimatta. We shall try to connect them with the families of the Varmans, Śālastambha, the Pālas and Vaidyadeva or Vallabhadeva. It is extremely doubtful and confusing that some accounts make Bhagadatta succeeded by the

51. T. Bloch, *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1906-7, pp. 25f.
52. *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, Bk. V., chap., XXVI.
53. The existence of this *Kalitā deśa* as late as the fifteenth century A.D. is found from the genealogy of the ancestors of Gopāl Ātā (Kākati, *Mother Goddess Kāmākhyā*, pp. 59-64.)

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Pālas. It is equally mistaken that in some chronicles Jitāri is succeeded by rulers with their surnames '*Nārāyaṇa*'. We reject Naraka's birth story as a result of the Boar incarnation of *Viṣṇu*. He was probably an Alpine chief, born somewhere in the hilly region either in Kāmarūpa or near Videha, and must have established himself in Prāgjyotiṣa, or was helped by Janaka in establishing himself there after doing away with the last ruler of the *Kirātas*. Hence, he may have flourished in the same period as Janaka and, like the latter, there existed probably more than one Naraka. Bhagadatta was either the son of the last Naraka or he was not his son at all;[54] because in disagreement with the *Purāṇas* and the *Tantras*, the *Epics*, much older in composition, do not mention Bhagadatta as Naraka's son. The period of Bhagadatta is still doubtful. If the Mahābhārata war took place round about the ninth century B.C.,[55] and he participated in the war, he might have flourished about the same period. This cannot, however, be substantiated by the epigraphic evidence. That Bhagadatta was another Alpine chief, perhaps distantly related to the *Bhauma* family of Naraka, is very likely. Now according to some chronicles there were as many as 24 or 25 kings of the family of Naraka-Bhagadatta, and they cannot be made to rule for more than 600 years, allowing an average of 25 years for each king. If the genealogy given in the epigraphs is to be believed, the Varman kings commencing their reigns from about the middle of the 4th century A. D. and tracing their origin from Bhagadatta are to be included within this group of 25 rulers. We have for the 13 Varman rulers from Puṣyavarman to Bhāskaravarman approximately 300 years and, therefore, another 300 years for their predecessors will mean that Naraka and Bhagadatta began their rule about the first century A. D. This makes us believe that either Naraka-Bhagadatta are dynastic titles, and, therefore, that there were more than 25 kings, or Bhagadatta of the 9th century B. C. could not be the same as the ruler of the first century A. D. But, on a consideration of all the existing sources, it appears likely that Bhagadatta's association with the Kuru-Pāṇḍavas is a later invention and he did not actually fight in the war. It is, therefore, feasible that he flourished during the first century A. D. and was distantly related to Naraka or rather the last Naraka, who also, is to be placed in the same period. No definite connection can be traced between Naraka of the pre-Buddhistic period and Bhagadatta of the first century A. D. Bhagadatta was succeeded by Vajradatta and others until in the fourth century A. D. Puṣyavarman of the same family established himself in Prāgjyotiṣa.

54. J. K. Miśra, *J.A.R.S.*, 1944, pp. 3f.
55. *P.H.A.I.*, pp. 6, 22.

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Of the family of Mādhava, who came from the west, only three or four rulers are mentioned after him, e.g., Lakṣmīpāla, Subāhu, Suparuā, Sumati and others. It is significant that the chronicles mention 21 kings of this family and exactly the same number is given in the epigraphs for the family that followed the Varman line. There appears to be little difficulty in their identification with the rulers of the line of Śālastambha, who established himself after Bhāskara. The manner by which Mādhava, a foreigner, came to Kāmarūpa and became king almost tallies with the description given in the epigraphs referring to the rise of Śālastambha.[56] The Virkramāditya-Subāhu conflict of the chronicles is again similar to the Harṣadeva-Yaśovarman war in the 8th century A. D., as narrated in Vākpati's *Gauḍavaho*. Subāhu's retirement to the Himalayas may have reference to his defeat, after which he might have been taken as a prisoner to Kanauj or Kāśmīra. There are other significant facts which, on a comparison of the accounts of the chronicles with those of the epigraphs, make us believe that the family of Mādhava, that followed the Naraka- Bhagadatta family, was the line of Śālastambha.

Jitāri of the next family, as we have stated, is associated with the west or the *Drāviḍa* country. He was a Kṣatriya, and settled many Brāhmaṇas and other high class Aryans. He was most probably Brahmapāla, the founder of the Pāla line in the epigraphs, because we find in the latter source that there was an end of the family of Śālastambha after Tyāgasiṁha, and the throne was occupied by Brahmapāla of a different line.[57] The rise of Brahmapāla, as given in the grants almost tallies with the rise of Jitāri. The number of rulers given in the chronicles is also equal to those of the epigraphs and, moreover, the second ruler of the accounts, Ratnapāla was also the same as that of the genealogy given in the grants. The reference made by chronicles to many Pāla rulers probably applies to this line of Brahmapāla. The last king Rāmacandra of the chronicles may be identified with Jayapāla, the last known ruler of the epigraphs. Rāmacandra may also be identified with Somapāla or Mayamatta of other accounts.

It is very likely that Ārimatta who is mentioned as Rāmacandra's son, founded another line. Traditions attributing to him the murder of his father do not appear true. The story of his birth as a result of his mother Harmatī's union with the Brahmaputra is obviously a myth. Rāmacandra was not probably his father at all. The extensive conquests made by him in Assam and Bengal

56. Bargāon grant, *J.A.S.B.*, LXVII, I, pp. 99f.
57. Bargāon grant, *V* 10, *J.A.S.B.*, LXVII, I, pp. 99f.

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and the establishment of his capitals at Viśvanāth and Ratnapura in Upper Assam along with the erection of a fortification, called Vaidargarh, make us believe that he was the same as Vaidyadeva, who established himself in Assam after dethroning Tiṅgyadeva.[58] Pheṅguā. who is said to have killed Ārimatta through the help of the latter's wife, is of doubtful historicity. It is possible that Pheṅguā was an invader from Bengal, probably of the Sena family, i. e. Vijayasena.[59] The three rulers mentioned after Ārimatta: Gajāṅka, Śukrāṅka and Mṛgāṅka, must have been the descendants of Vaidyadeva, or may be related to the family of Vallabhadeva, whose existence in Assam in A. D. 1185 with his three ancestors, Bhāskara, Rāyārideva and Udayakarṇa, is testified by his plates.[60] The possibility of another small family being established by the descendants or successors of Vaidyadeva or Vallabhadeva, (who might have been engaged in the repulsion of the Muslim invasions, beginning with that of Bakhtiyar in A. D. 1205-6) under the name of Pṛthu[61] and Sandhiyā, cannot also be discarded. The *Yoginī Tantra* mentions a king, Jalpeśvara , who is said to have built a Śiva temple in Jalpāiguri, and it is likely that he was the same ruler as Pṛthu.[62]

5. Chronology of the Bhauma dynasty : importance of Prāgjyotiṣa :

While the traditional accounts of the later dynasties may thus be arranged together to constitute a continuous line of historical events, the historical character of the *Bhauma* family is yet to be established on the basis of genuine evidence. Taking the Varman line of kings as included in the list of 25 kings of Bhagadatta's line, the beginning of the historical dynasty cannot be with reason extended beyond the Ist century A. D. or a little earlier. It is difficult at the present state of our knowledge to connect Naraka, of the time of Janaka of Videha of the pre--Buddhistic period, with Bhagadatta, who, as we have already stated, might have flourished about the Ist century A. D. Granting that Naraka was a dynastic title and Bhagadatta was the son of the last Naraka, which is also doubtful, we do not know how many Narakas intervened between them. In fact, the successors of Naraka are unknown. It is equally difficult to identify the rulers intervening between Bhagadatta and Puṣyavarman. So, what became of Prāgjyotiṣa after Naraka and his successors

58. Kamauli grant of Vaidyadeva, *E.I.*, II, pp. 347f.
59. Deopārā Inscription, (*E.I.*, I, p. 305).
60. Kielhorn, *E.I.*, V, pp. 181-85.
61. *Camb. History of India*, III, p. 54.
62. *E.H.K.*, pp. 266f.

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is difficult to hazard at present. But, we have already indicated that, till the foundation of the dynasty of Magadha by Bimbisāra-Śaiśunāga during the 6th century B. C. or a little earlier, the kingdom might have been included within the political supremacy of the Pāṇḍavas and their successors, and during the time of Bimbisāra, the kingdom played no significant part in North Indian politics. The *Brāhmaṇas*, referring to the spread of the Aryan culture to the east of the *Karatoyā* do not mention *Prāgjyotiṣa*. The earliest reference to the country is made by the *Śāṅkhyāyana Gṛhya Saṁgraha*,[63] which probably refers to the pre-Buddhistic period. But, as we have stated elsewhere, the Buddhist works, referring to the sixteen *mahājanapadas*,[64] do not include Prāgjyotiṣa. The *Nikāyas*, however, mention the *Lauhitya*,[65] which is associated by other sources with Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa. We have also reasons to believe that ancient Assam might have been known to the Buddhist world by another name.[65a]

Besides Hecataeus and Herodotus, Megasthenes and Arrian as early as the 4th century B. C. seem to refer to the people and places of ancient Assam, though they do not make particular mention of the kingdom.[66] All the classical writers refer to the lands of the Prasii and the Gangaridae, the former identified by most writers with Magadha with its capital Palibothra (Pāṭaliputra) and the latter with the *Gaṅgā-rāṣṭra* lying to the east and south-east of Magadha. It may be suggested that the land of the Prasii included at least a portion of the modern Assam valley and the whole of North Bengal as far as Mithilā, and the Gaṅgaridae probably lived in the region comprising the whole of South Bengal stretching to the sea, and both the kingdoms were within Magadha during the time of the Nandas.[67] But, it is an extremely doubtful point. It is equally doubtful whether the empire of the Mauryas during the 4th-3rd century B. C. absorbed Prāgjyotiṣa. N. K. Bhattasali writes that their empire did not include Kāmarūpa, as the flood of Buddhism during Aśoka's time left Assam untouched.[68] B. C. Law also holds that the kingdom remained independent and outside the pale of Aśoka's religious propaganda.[69] We have discussed the question

63. *Chap.* II, 38.
64. *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, I, 213; IV, 252, 256, 260.
65. *Saṁyutta Nikāya*, IV, 117; *Dīgha Nikāya*, I, 224.
65a. To the Buddhists of Burma and South-east Asia it is *Waisālilong*, and to those of Tibet, *Tangyur* or *Kahgyur*.
66. See Chapter III (Geography).
67. *J.A.R.S.*, II, pp. 52-54.
68. *I.H.Q.*, XXII, pp. 245f.
69. *J.U.P.H.S.*, XVIII, pp. 43f; Smith, *Aśoka*, p. 81.

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of the introduction of Buddhism in another place; the absence of any Aśokan monument in Assam is a strong ground for believing that the country lay beyond the political influence of the Mauryas. It is equally possible that during the rule of their successors, the Śuṅga-Mitras, the kingdom remained outside the pale of Magadhan political hegemony. But, Kauṭilya's reference to various places of Kāmarūpa in connection with industrial products makes us believe that about the 4th-3rd century B. C. the kingdom played an important part in the cultural history of Eastern India. If Yuan Chwang's observation that a thousand generations, meaning one thousand years, had elapsed between Bhāskaravarman and his ancestors, has any historical basis, Naraka- Bhauma may also be placed during the same period.

The political significance of the kingdom from the time of the Mauryas until the beginning of the Christian era was but negligible. But the growing importance of the kingdom during the Ist and 2nd century A. D. is shown by the significant mention of it, made by the *Periplus* and *Ptolemy's Geography*' as by the early Brahmanical works. Beginning with the Ist century A. D., therefore, when Bhagadatta may have ruled, the kingdom began to grow in importance. The *Bṛhatsaṁhitā's* reference to Prāgjyotiṣa, based on the *Parāśara Tantra* of the beginning of the Christian era,[70] confirms the classical writers' significant reference to the land in both its political and cultural aspects. From the 3rd-4th century A. D., we are on firmer grounds regarding the political history of the period, and the Brāhmaṇical and secular sources make many references to Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa.[70a] To conclude, the political history of the land during the proto-historic and early historical periods is still obscure. We are still in the dark about the long period between Naraka and Bhagadatta and that between Bhagadatta and Puṣyavarman of the 4th century A. D., before which Prāgjyotiṣa did not attract the attention of North Indian dynasties.

It is wrong to infer that Prāgjyotiṣa alone continued to flourish throughout the period. The chronicles, already quoted, show that other small kingdoms were established in different parts of the land. Historical evidence of the existence of kingdoms in *Ḍavāka*, *Kadali*,[71]

70. Kern, *Bṛhatsaṁhitā*, p. 32; H.C. Chakladar, *Studies in the Kāmasūtra*, p. 72.

70a. Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa like Kāmarūpa-Kāmākhyā, from the dawn of history stand for spiritual entitity and cultural unit in the scheme of Indian civilisation. They are mentioned together as if one is indistinguishable from the other.

71. R.M. Nath, *J.A.R.S.*, VII, pp. 19-23.

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Maṇipur[72] *Hiḍimbā* and *Tripurā*,[73] is not lacking though subsequently these may have been absorbed by the larger kingdom of Kāmarūpa. It is equally wrong to attribute the foundation of these small kingdoms only to the Kirāta and Alpine-Aryan or Hinduised chiefs. It is reasonable to hold that at an early period in the history of the land, *Boḍo* or Mongolian chiefs established principalities when, after Naraka and his successors, the central kingdom of Prāgjyotiṣa was either divided among them or was on the verge of extinction. It is almost certain that during this period Prāgjyotṣa dwindled into insignificance for centuries, from the time of Naraka and his successors[74] until the Indian and classical writers, beginning with the Ist Century A. D., brought it to notice, and its lost political supremacy over Assam was re-established in about the 3rd-4th century A. D. The extension of the kingdom at different periods of its history also indicates to a certain extent the importance of the land in contemporary politics.

6. Conclusion :

We cannot conclude this section but by repeating that no historical fact can be ascertained from the story of Naraka's birth as a result of the Boar incarnation of *Viṣṇu*. The legend points only to his abode on the *Varāha* hill and high antiquity. He was an Alpine chief and the contemporary of Janaka. We cannot be definite about his chronology, but he probably flourished before the time of the Buddha. We do not find any direct relation between Naraka and Bhagadatta; the latter may have been the son of the last Naraka, associated with the worship of Kāmākhyā, in which case both of them flourished during the 1st century A.D., and, therefore, Bhagadatta's association with the *Mahābhārata* war in the 9th century B.C. is a later invention. Whether or not Bhagadatta was the son of the last Naraka, it seems certain that he was an Alpine chief. He may have been helped by a prince of Northern India to gain the throne. The story of Kṛṣṇa's invasion of Prāgjyotiṣa, Naraka's death at his hands and the installation of Bhagadatta, can only be explained on such an assumption. In any case, the foundation of the first political dynasty in Prāgjyotiṣa is to be attributed to Alpine chiefs, having probably an admixture of Aryan blood. With varying fortunes the kingdom continued to flourish for centuries. The smaller kingdoms, established in different places at different times by tribal chiefs had but little influence and insi-

72. Syed. S. Ahmed, *J.A.R.S.*, III, pp. 66-69; Dalton, *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal* p. 49.
73. K.L. Barua, *J.A.R.S.*, III, pp. 92-98.
74. Pargiter, *J.A.S.B.*, 1887, p. 105; *C.R.*, 1867, pp. 517f.

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gnificant political career; in course of time they were brought under the hegemony of Prāgjyotiṣa or absorbed within it. Though the kingdom passed through various stages, it remained the centre of political gravity, until it was pressed hard by the Koch and their predecessors from the west, and by the Āhoms in the east. In fact, for the pre-Āhom political history of Assam, we are mainly concerned with Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa, which held sway not only over the plains but also to a certain extent over the tribes, and which became the means of the diffusion of the culture of Assam. It was through this central kingdom again that this ancient land had contact with other parts of India, both political and cultural, in the proto-historic and historical period.

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SECTION 2

THE VARMAN LINE

1. Puṣyavarman—founder of the family :

The real political history of ancient Assam begins with the foundation of the Varman line of kings. As epigraphy proves, Puṣyavarman, who traced his descent from the *Bhauma* dynasty of Naraka-Bhagadatta, was the first historical ruler of the line. We have suggested the possibility that the Varman line started in the first century A.D., if not earlier, and that the last Naraka and Bhagadatta, who flourished about the same time, really founded the first historical dynasty. The connection between the *Bhauma* dynasty and the Varman line is shown in the epigraphs. The Doobi grant (vv 5-6) states that in the lineage of Naraka was born a king of kings, named Puṣyavarman, equal to *Śiva* in honour and fame, equal to *Indra* in sacrifices, an annihilator of enemies. The goddess of fortune, though fickle by nature, was steady with him, who was, as it were, a second *Viṣṇu*. The Nidhanpur grant (v. 7) states thus: "When the kings of his (Naraka) family, having enjoyed the position (of rulers) for three thousand years, (all) attained the condition of gods, Puṣyavarman became the lord of the world."[1] The same reference is found in the Nālandā clay Seal: (*Śrīmān Narakatanayo Bhagadatta-Vajradattānvayo Mahārājādhirāja Śrī Prāgjyotiṣendraḥ Puṣyavarmā*). The significance of this connection is obscure. In fact, all the rulers of the period, ending with the Pāla line, trace their descent from Naraka-Bhagadatta, just as other lines in other parts of India traced their descent from the *Sūryya* or the *Candra vaṁśa;* similar legendary genealogies are found in the early history of Egypt, Babylonia, Greece and Rome. But, we have tried to forge a link between the *Bhauma* dynasty and the Varman line. We cannot disbelieve all the accounts of Naraka, given in literature and confirmed by epigraphy, and therefore, once we accept the historicity of Naraka and suppose that he was either an Alpine chief from Assam or an Aryan chief, related to Janaka of Videha, the story of his birth as a result of the Boar incarnation of *Viṣṇu* becomes clear. Historically interpreted, as we have already examined, this legend indicates that he was either autochthonous, born

1. The epigraphic evidence that three thousand years had elapsed between the family of Naraka and Puṣyavarman is highly improbable. It has a bearing on the high antiquity of the former.

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in the *Varāha* mountain of an Alpine family, already long settled in the land, or that he was an outsider, established by Janaka as a feudatory chief of Prāgjyotiṣa. The legend also shows that Naraka and Janaka were contemporaries.

We have also suggested the possibility of the existence of more than one Naraka, to the last of which Bhagadatta may have been related. We have rejected Bhagadatta's participation in the *Mahābhārata* war of about the 9th century B.C. Both literature and the writers of the epigraphs may have been mistaken in making Bhagadatta the son of Naraka of the age of Janaka, and similar mistakes have been committed by the scribes in showing a direct descent of the historical rulers from Naraka. As we have stated, we cannot trace any direct connection between the first Naraka and Bhagadatta, though the latter may have been the son of the last Naraka, distantly related to the *Bhauma* dynasty, founded by Naraka.

It, therefore, appears that if the genealogy given in the records, tracing the origin of rulers from Naraka and Bhagadatta, be relied upon and compared with those given in the chronicles, and if we include the ancestors of Puṣyavarman in the list of 25 kings, the last Naraka and Bhagadatta cannot be far removed from the first century A.D. The list cannot be made to include the first Naraka and his successors. In short, the name Naraka is a dynastic title, and his successors up to the last Naraka are to be excluded from this list of 25 kings of the Varman line. Evidently there were other rulers intervening between the first Naraka, the founder of the *Bhauma* dynasty , and the last Naraka and Bhagadatta, who can, therefore, be related to the original founder of the dynasty only distantly. It is only on this assumption that Puṣyavarman's connection with Bhagadatta and the *Bhauma* dynasty can be shown, and this also testifies to the fact that Puṣyavarman belonged to a family, originally established either by an Alpine chief or an Aryan adventurer, in both cases, indicating his rather humble pedigree.

It may well be feasible that the same dynasty or line was continued until the 7th century A.D. or even later. While in the intervening periods between Naraka and his successors and Bhagadatta and his descendants, the kingdom attained little political significance, with the accession of Puṣyavarman, it gained new power and influence not only in Eastern India but also in Northern India as a whole, as suggested by his assumption of the epithet, '*Mahārājādhirāja*'. The dynasty ruled from the city of Prāgjyotiṣa, as it had been the capital during the reigns of his ancestors, though a few other small principalities may have been established in other parts of the province, before Puṣyavarman or even contemporaneously. The

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epithet, '*Prāgjyotiṣādhipati*', used by all the rulers of the different families, must indicate that throughout the ancient period, Prāgjyotiṣa remained the capital city of all the rulers tracing their connection from the original *Bhauma* dynasty. It is wrong perhaps to agree with B.M. Barua[1a] that the epithet was borrowed from the *Epics*.

When and how Puṣyavarman occupied the throne at Prāgjyotiṣa is still uncertain. There is no basis for truth in the statement of R.M. Nath that he came originally from Central India and helped Samudragupta to expel the reigning king of Kāmarūpa and afterwards established himself on the throne.[2] It is equally wrong to connect the Varmans of Kāmarūpa with those of Trigarta in the *Udīcyottarapatha* or somewhere in the Punjab, as done by B.M. Barua.[3] There were many Varman families ruling at different times in ancient India before and after Puṣyavarman, and in the absence of any definite reference either in literature or records, it may not be possible to explain his rise to power. Suffice it to hold at the present state of our knowledge that he was an Aryan prince having most probably an admixture of Alpine blood and distantly connected with the family of Bhagadatta, who in our opinion, flourished during or about the first century A.D.

D.R. Bhandarkar has, on the basis of epigraphs, divided the rulers of Kāmarūpa into: (a) the Puṣyavarman family of *Prāgjyotiṣa;* (b) the *Bhaumas* of *Hārūppeśvara;* (c) the early Śālastambha family of *Hārūppeśvara;* (d) the later Śālastambha family of *Prāgjyotiṣa* and (e) the *Bhauma* Pālas of *Durjayā*.[4] But epigraphy shows that there were only three main lines, all tracing their origin from a common ancestry and using the same epithet '*Prāgjyotiṣādhipati*'. It is not correct to refer to some as rulers of Prāgjyotiṣa, others of Hārūppeśvara and still others of Durjayā; nor is it certain that the rulers of the Śālastambha line ruled from Hārūppeśvara or the Pālas from Durjayā and Kāmarūpanagara.[5]

We shall show that Prāgjyotiṣa remained the capital, and other place names, occurring in the grants, may be taken as temporary places of residence, or even towns of minor importance.

1a. *I.H.Q.*, XXIII, pp. 200-220.
2. *Background of Assamese Culture*, pp. 32-33.
3. *I.H.Q.*, XXIII, pp. 200f.
4. *App.* to *E.I.*, XXIII.
5. See K.L. Barua, *J.A.R.S.*, VI, pp. 12-18.

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The first historical mention of a Kāmarūpa king is found in the Allahbad *Praśasti* of Samudra Gupta, which refers to '*Samataṭa-Ḍavāka-Kāmarūpa-Nepāla-Karttṛpurādi pratyanta nṛpatibhiḥ*', indicating that Samudra Gupta's "imperious commands were fully gratified by giving all (kinds of) taxes and obeying (his) orders and coming to perform obeissance."[6] But the name of the frontier king of Kāmarūpa is not mentioned, nor do we know whether Puṣyavarman was the contemporary of the Gupta emperor. There are writers who assume that Samudravarman, or even his son Balavarman I, was the contemporary of the emperor and was defeated or exterminated by the latter. In the opinion of R.G. Basak, Puṣyavarman was the contemporary of Chandragupta and Samudravarman of Samudragupta.[7] H.C. Ray contends "that there is no conclusive proof that the Guptas conquered Kāmarūpa", but the similarity of the names of Samudragupta and Samudravarman and of the names of their queens and the insertion of the Gupta era in an inscription, lead him to suspect "that Gupta influence at least must have penetrated in the valley of the Brahmaputra".[8] He further adds that Samudravarman and Samudragupta were contemporaries. Leaving aside the question of Gupta influence for the present, mere similarity of names may not prove their contemporaneity; nor can it prove that the names Samudravarman and (his queen) Dattadevī were given in imitation of Samudragupta, suggesting the acceptance of the political hegemony of the Guptas, as held by P. Bhattacharya;[9] on the contrary it seems to indicate the rise of Samudravarman subsequent to that Gupta emperor.

It is unlikely that Balavarman, Puṣyavarman's grandson, as taken by some, was one of the nine kings, exterminated by Samudragupta in *Āryyāvarta*[10], and hence as the latter's contemporary. N.N. Vasu, placing Puṣyavarman between A.D. 275-300, contends that Samudragupta defeated Balavarman and, what appears to be improbable, he makes Samudravarman marry into the family of the Guptas. In spite of this relation, he asserts, Samudragupta was forced to fight against Balavarman according to the rule of the *Aśvamedha* sacrifice.[11] K.N. Dikṣhit also identifies Balavarman of the epigraph with an ancestor of Bhāskara.[12] The same

6. Fleet *C.I.I.*, III, pp. If (line 22).
7. *H.N.E,I.*, p. 211.
8. *D.H.N.I.*, 1, p. 238; also R.C. Majumdar, *The Classical Age*, pp. 80f.
9. *K.S.*, Intro., p. 14.
10. Fleet, *C.I.I.*, III, pp. If (line 21).
11. *Social History of Kāmarūpa*, 1, p. 141.
12. *Pros. of the First Oriental Conference*, 1920, I, p. CXXIV.

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view is held by N.K. Bhattasali,[13] supported by Bhandarkar,[14] a theory which not only raises a new problem in chronology but also goes against the evidence from epigraphy. On the basis of the Baḍgaṅgā epigraph of Bhūtivarman, it can be shown that it is not chronologically feasible to make Balavarman the contemporary of Samudragupta. This has been pointed out by D.C. Sircar;[15] but his contention of the acceptance of the Gupta hegemony by Puṣyavarman, on the basis of similarity of names between Samudravarman and the Gupta emperor and the use of the Gupta era, is yet to be definitely proved. Supporting Sircar's assumption that Puṣyavarman was the contemporary of Samudragupta, the relation between them being that of a vassal and an overlord, B.M. Barua also contends that the names were given in imitation. "One may go perhaps a step further and suggest", writes Barua, "that Puṣyavarman was the first Indo-Aryan ruler set up by Samudragupta over the two territories of Kāmarūpa and Ḍavāka unified into a single kingdom".[16] It is yet to be proved that Puṣyavarman was set up by the Guptas, as held by the writer. N.K. Bhattasali contends that the enemies of Skandagupta were the descendants of the family of Puṣyavarman.[17] His theory has been rigthtly challenged by B.M. Barua [18] and Sircar,[19] because there is no connection except a slight similarity of name between Puṣyavarman and the Puṣyāmitras, who are referred to as Skandagupta's enemies in the Bhitarī epigraph.[20]

In any case, we cannot reasonably identify Balavarman of the inscription of Samudragupta with the grandson of Puṣyavarman, as the contemporary rulers of Northern India, said to have been uprooted by the emperor, are sharply distinguished from the *pratyanta-nṛpatis* or vassal kings.[21] It is nowhere mentioned that Samudragupta invaded Kāmarūpa, much less exterminated its ruler. It may not have been due to an actual invasion, but perhaps out of fear of the so-called *digvijaya* of the imperial invader that the frontier kings from kingdoms like that of *Ḍavāka* offered temporary submission. In this connection we may refer to the description of *Raghu's digvijaya* in Kālidāsa's *Raghuvaṁśa* (iv, 81-84), which states that when he crossed the river *Lauhitya*, the lord of Prāgjyotiṣa began to tremble in

13. *I.H.Q.*, XXI, pp. 19f; *E.I.*, 1947. pp. 18-23.
14. *App. to Epigraphia Indica*, XIX-XXIII.
15. *J.A.R.S.*, X, pp. 63f.
16. *I.H.Q.*, XXIII, pp. 200-20; Sircar, *I.H.Q.*, XXI, pp. 143-45.
17. *I.H.Q.*, XXI, pp. 19f.
18. *Ibid*, XXIII, pp. 200f.
19. *Ibid*, XXI, pp. 143-45.
20. D.C. Sircar, *Select Inscriptions*, I, pp. 312f.
21. K.P. Jayaswal identifies Balavarman with *Kalyāṇavarman*, ruler of Pāṭaliputra: (*J.B.O.R.S.*, 1933, p. 142).

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fear. The king of Kāmarūpa, who had successfully withstood other conquerors with his elephants, paid homage to *Raghu*. The lord of the Kāmarūpas worshipped the shadow of his feet with offerings of flowers, consisting of precious stones. This reference is taken by some to be an actual echo of the invasion of Samudragupta during the time of Samudravarman. R.G. Basak, for instance, holds that Samudravarman was rich enough to gratify the invader with presents and thus save his kingdom from being included within the Gupta empire. Kāmarūpa, therefore, in his opinion, preserved its autonomy but remained as a subordinate State.[22] But, we have already attempted to show that Samudravarman was not Samudragupta's contemporary; nor can it be proved that Kālidāsa's *Raghu* was Samudragupta. The reliability of the evidence rests not only on the identification of the real Vikramāditya but also on the age of Kālidāsa, who is reasonably placed during the fifth century A.D.[23] S. K. Bhūyān finds in *Raghu's digvijaya* an actual echo of the defeat of a Kāmarūpa ruler at the hands of the father of the poet's patron.[24] But, the mysterious Vikramādityas, so commonly found in our traditions, seem often only to recall the ideal Hindu *Digvijayins* and may not have any actual bearing on contemporary historical events. It is reasonable to suppose that Samudragupta, if he was the prototype of *Raghu*, did not actually invade Kāmarūpa; his contemporary Puṣyavarman, like other minor rulers, offered submission of his own accord. K.L. Barua's identification of Subāhu with Puṣyavarman, and his supposed defeat at the hands of Samudragupta, are corroborated neither by epigraphy nor by Assamese chronicles; nor can the event be ascribed to A.D. 380, as K.L. Barua has surmised ;[25] because Subāhu, according to our chronicles, belonged to the family of Mādhava, and we shall try to prove that, if the traditional conflict between Sabāhu and Vikramāditya has any historical basis, it probably took place in the 8th century A.D. between Harṣadeva and Yaśovarman of Vākpati's *Gauḍavaho*.

Another disputed question is the location of *Ḍavāka*, mentioned in Allahabad Pillar inscription. It is associated with the Kapili valley in modern Nowgong in Assam,[26] because even to-day it contains a place called *Ḍavāka*. V. Smith has located *Ḍavāka* round about modern districts of Bogrā, Dinājpur and Rājshāhi to the north of the Ganges between

22. *H.N.E.I.*, pp. 212-13; also *Pros. 2nd Oriental Conference*, 1922 pp. 333-34.

23. M. Collins, *Geographical Data of the Raghuvaṁśa* and *Daśakumāracarita*, p. 48 and foot note; also M. Chakravarti, *J.R.A.S.*, 1904, p. 160.

24. *I.H.Q.*, V, pp. 462-63.

25. *E.H.K.*, pp. 42-43, 53.

26. V. Smith, *E.H.I.*, p. 316.

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Samataṭa and Kāmarūpa.[27] R.S. Tripathi locates it in Dacca or the hill tracts of Chittagong.[28] But, as rightly remarked by H.C. Raychaudhuri, the location of *Ḍavāka* in North Bengal is wrong.[29] In the opinion of R.M. Nath, during the time of Puṣyavarman there was another independent kingdom of *Ḍavāka* in the Kapili valley.[30] This is supported by Bhattasali[31] and others.[32] Gerini wrongly identifies the Dobassai of Ptolemy with *Ḍavāka* in Upper Burma, the Kapili valley with the Gupta empire or the Saran district, and the river Kapili with the Ganges.[33] His identification is based on the supposition that one of the senders of the two missions from the Kapili, as mentioned in the *Shung Shu*, (A.D. 420-79) who is called Yu chai (A.D. 428) was no other than Kumāragupta I.[34] But, we shall try to prove that the Kapili valley was in *Ḍavāka* in Nowgong, as is shown by the present Kapili river and by a number of antiquities throughout the region, which confirm our belief that an important principality was established there, and that the king from the Kapili, mentioned in the Chinese account, was a Kāmarūpa king. All these show that the frontier State of *Ḍavāka*, like Kāmarūpa, may have owed allegiance to the Gupta empire during the time of Samudragupta. The existing materials seem to prove that *Ḍavāka* was not as old as Prāgjyotiṣa and may have been founded shortly before the 4th century A.D.

To conclude, Puṣyavarman was the contemporary of Samudragupta, and *Ḍavāka* was another frontier State lying close to the east of Kāmarūpa. Both the States may have submitted to Samudragupta, though their autonomy might have remained unimpaired. The use of the names like those of the Gupta emperor and his queen by Samudravarman and Dattadevī,[35] and the use of the Gupta era by a subsequent ruler of Kāmarūpa are insufficient evidence to prove the serious influence of the Guptas over the kingdom. No actual invasion of Kāmarūpa took place, nor was it included in the empire. As M. Collins rightly observes, in the *Raghuvaṁśa*, Kāmarūpa lay "outside the limits of Raghu's empire".[36] The contemporaneity of Puṣyavarman with the Guptas is, however, one of the sheet-anchors

27. *Ibid*, p. 271.
28. *History of Ancient India*, p. 244.
29. *P.H.A.I.*, p. 544.
30. *I.C.*, VI, p. 46; *J.A.R.S.*, 1937, p. 15.
31. *E.I.*, 1947, pp. 18-23; *Bhāratavarṣa* (B.S.) 1348, p. 90.
32. P. C. Sen, *J.A.R.S.*, I, pp. 12-15.
33. *Researches on Ptolemy's Geography*, pp. 52f.
34. *J.A.R.S.*, 1910, pp. 1187-1201.
35. In the Clay Seal of Bhāskara, the name is Dattavatī (L2).
36. *Geographical Data of Raghuvaṁśa and Daśakumāracarita*, p. 22.

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of the chronology of the dynasty. The accession of Puṣyavarman cannot be placed after A.D. 380. Some writers like Bhattasali[37] and Vasu place him during the 3rd century A.D. or a little later; Gait places him during the 5th century A.D.[38] Both the theories are not established. The earliest known date of Chandragupta II, according to the Mathurā inscription, is A.D. 380. This date, however, depends on the reading of a defective line in the epigraph. D.R. Bhandarkar reads it as *prathame*, which places Chandragupta's accession in 380; D.C. Sircar reads as *pañcame*.[39] In any case, Samudragupta could not have ruled long after A.D. 375,[40] and he, therefore, must have finished his campaigns earlier. We shall, therefore, find no chronological difficulty in ascribing for Puṣyavarman's reign A.D. 355-380. This date is supported by the Baḍgaṅgā epigraph of Bhūtivarman (G.E. 234=A.D. 553-554), who was 8th in descent from Puṣyavarman. If we allow for each prince an average of 25 years, Puṣyavarman's accession may reasonably be placed in about A.D. 355.

It was Puṣyavarman who after a long period of obscurity raised Kāmarūpa to an important position in the political history of ancient India. The assumption of the title, *Mahārājādhirāja* indicates his independent status; but it is not known how far he was successful in the extension of the kingdom; nor does any evidence prove whether he made any attempt at welding the smaller States like *Ḍavāka* into one unified kingdom, as asserted by B.M. Barua.[41]

2. Samudravarman :

The second ruler of the line, the son and successor of Puṣyavarman, Samudravarman may be placed between A.D. 380-405. We allow 25 years for his reign because of his important career. Inscriptions refer to his kingly and warlike qualities. The Doobi grant (vv 7-9) states that he was "of illustrious fame and endowed with all good qualities, who was like an ocean and equal to his father in power. He was comparable to ocean for his greatness and coolness, and also in view of the fact that he was inestimable, amiable, grave. He, the abode of all good qualities,

37. He places Puṣyavarman between A.D. 310-330 and his grandson Balavarman between 360-390. (*I.H.Q.*, XXI, pp. 19f.)

38. *History of Assam*, p. 28.

39. *E.I.*, XXI, pp. 8f; Sircar, *Select Inscriptions*, I, pp. 269f.

40. H.C. Raychaudhuri, *P.H.A.I.*, p. 552.

41. *I.H.Q.*, XXIII, pp. 200-20.

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the destroyer of his enemies, the self-controlled, the righteous, went to heaven after having enjoyed the entire world". The Nidhanpur grant (v 8) further states that he was like the fifth *samudra* (ocean) and there was no *mātsyanyāya* in his kingdom. These vague statements, however, do not give us any clue to his enemies, nor can we suppose that he held sway over a vast kingdom. He was probably the contemporary of Chandragupta II. The reference to *mātsyanyāya* in the epigraph, which is explained as a state of disorder, in which the stronger oppress the weaker, as the big fish swallow the smaller ones, and which is said to have been removed by Samudravarman, indicates his consolidation of the political power and the establishment of a peaceful reign. The assumption of the title of *Mahārājādhirāja* suggests that, like his father, he ruled as an independent king.[42]

It is recorded in a Burmese tradition, referred to by Phayre, that an Indian king Samuda or Samudra was ruling in Upper Burma in A.D. 105.[43] Gait points out that this king "proceeded thither through Assam and so must the Hindus who led the Tchāmpās or Shāns in their conquest of the mouths of the Mekong in 280 A.D."[44] On the basis of this doubtful evidence, N.N. Vasu wrongly identifies this Samudra with Samudravarman and adds that, like Samudragupta, he was a paramount sovereign from Karatoyā to the Pacific Ocean,[45] a statement which is chronologically absurd if the date A.D. 105 is genuine. The kingdom of Kāmarūpa could not have extended to the shores of the Pacific Ocean, nor could the influence of the *Bhauma* dynasty have equalled that of Samudragupta. The comparison made between the two rulers by Vasu does not bear historical scrutiny, although it may be that some colonies were established during this period or even earlier from ancient Assam. In any case, the identification of Samudra with Samudravarman is unhistorical.

Kālidāsa incidentally mentions that *Raghu's* son *Aja* selected a king of Kāmarūpa as his best man in the former's marriage with Indumatī.[46] The reference may have a bearing on the importance of the frontier State of Kāmarūpa, but the poet does not mention the name of the king. The identification with Samudravarman,[47] is doubtful. The statement may not have any foundation at all, and Kālidāsa may not have flourished during his time.

42. *Clay Seals of Bhāskara*, line 2.
43. *History of Burma*, pp. 3-4, 15.
44. *History of Assam*, p. 9.
45. *Social History of Kāmarūpa*, 1, p. 142.
46. *Raghuvaṁśa*, Canto. VII.
47. K.L. Barua, *E.H.K.* pp. 44f.

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3. Balavarman :

Samudravarman was succeeded by his son Balavarman who may be placed between A.D. 405-420. This short period of his reign appears reasonable in view of his uneventful career. Epigraphy makes a few vague references to his qualities and warlike activities. He "was considered pre-eminent and virtuous on account of the stand he took for the stability of his desired end, and, endowed with wisdom and royal attributes, he acquired sovereignty. Having endured fire-like arrows in battle and conquered the mighty array of his enemies, he enjoyed the earth, and as such was known as Balavarman".[48] The Nidhanpur grant (v 9) further states that "his force and armour never broke up and his army could easily march against the enemies."

Like his predecessors, Balavarman also assumed the title of *Mahārājādhirāja*. We have already examined the facts which show that he was not the king of the Allahabad Pillar inscription. It is difficult to say, on the basis of the vague statements in the grants, what battles he actually fought with his enemies. It may be conjectured that he tried for the conquest of *Ḍavāka* or other small principalities to the east, but he could not have been successful, since his triumphs are described in the vaguest and most general terms.

The many sided qualities and virtuous life of the king may have engaged the attention of contemporary rulers. The *Rājataraṅgiṇī* refers to a Kāmarūpa princess, Amṛtaprabhā, for whose marriage a *svayambara* was held, at which Meghavāhana, the king of Kāśmira, married her in the presence of all. Meghavāhana is said to have gone "to the land of the king of Prāgjyotiṣa, who was descended from the race of *Viṣṇu* for the *svayambara* of the king's daughter.—There in the presence of kings, he received from the princess Amṛtaprabhā the bridegroom's garland, while the parasol of *Varuṇa* cast its shade upon him".[49]

In the same work there is a reference to the building of a *vihāra* by Amṛtaprabhā "for the benefit of foreign *bhikṣus*". It states that the preceptor "of her father who had come from a foreign country, called Loh and who in the language of that (country) was designated as Stunpā, built the stupa (called that of) Lo-Stunpā."[50] The reference to a *guru* from Tibet is significant; but it is not known how far Buddhism was pre-

48. Doobi grant, *VV* 10-12.
49. Bk. II, 147-48.
50. Bk. III, 9-10.

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valent in the country at that time. If Balavarman was the father of Amṛtaprabhā, who is said in the grants to have led a virtuous life,[51] and if Meghavāhana may be placed during his time, it will bear witness to the fact that Kāmarūpa came under the influence of Buddhism as early as the 5th century A. D. The historicity of the *vihāra* is also proved by Ou Kung. "The attribution of a stupa", rightly states M.A. Stein, "known by Tibetan designation (Lo-Stunpā) to the *guru* of this foreign queen, seems also to rest on genuine tradition".[52] If we accept Stein's reasonable conclusion, the importance of the matrimonial alliance between Kāmarūpa and Kāśmira cannot be ignored, in view of the contemporary political history of India.

4. Kalyāṇavarman :

Born of Ratnavatī, Kalyāṇavarman was the son and successor of Balavarman. On the basis of epigraphy and other references, he may be placed between A. D. 420-440. He is said to have "indulged in the supreme pleasure of doing good to others"; and he "was of equal strength to *Indra*—with a face like the moon"; he "did noble deeds and killed the mighty array of his enemies"; [53] and "was not the abode even of very small faults".[54]

The reference to his defeat of enemies and his 'face like the moon' is significant; because it has an important bearing on the history of the period. As we have already pointed out, the *Shung Shu*, covering the period from A. D. 420 to 479, reports the sending of an embassy to China by a king of Kapili. He has been identified by Gerini [55] with Kumāragupta I on the basis of a wrong identification of *Ḍavāka* and Kapili. We have tried to show that these regions are to be located in modern Nowgong and that the king also was from Assam. The king who sent the mission in A. D. 428 is simply called Yu Chai (with the eye or the face like the moon), which appears to be a nickname. The name was not Yue-ai, as pointed out by K. L. Barua.[56] As noticed by Gerini on the basis of the accounts of *Shung Shu*, it was Yu Chai.[57] The early relations between *Kāmarūpa*, *Ḍavāka*, *Tripurā*, *Hiḍimbā*, *Kadali*, and other small

51. Doobi grant , V 12.
52. Kalhaṇa's *Rājataraṅgiṇī*, I, pp. 81-82.
53. Doobi grant, V 14.
54. Nidhanpur grant, V 10.
55. *Researches on Ptolemy's Geography*, pp. 52f; *J.R.A.S.*, 1910., pp. 1187f.
56. *E.H.K.*, p. 46.
57. *J.R.A.S.*, 1910, pp. 1187f.

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States lying to the south-western and eastern side of the kingdom, are proved not only by epigraphy and archaeological remains, but also by literature. According to the *Rājamālā*, the rulers of Tripurā trace their origin from *Yayāti*, and it is said that Pratardhana, the 12th king from him, conquered the *Kirātas* and founded a kingdom with its capital on the bank of the Kapili river.[58] This kingdom may have comprised the Kapili valley, North Cāchār and perhaps also the modern district of Cāchār to the west of Maṇipur. It is also recorded that when Dṛkpati, the Kachāri king of *Hiḍimbā*, conquered the Kapili valley, the ancient *Trivega*, Kapili or *Ḍavāka* were absorbed by the *Hiḍimbā* kingdom.[59] While the kings of Tripurā may have founded a kingdom comprising the Kapili valley, the king from that region who sent the mission to China can hardly be identified, as done by K. L. Barua, with a Tripurā king; nor can we agree with Barua that the *Hiḍimbā* rulers absorbed the valley about A. D. 500 after which the kings of Kāmarūpa re-acquired it, to lose it again to the Kachāris in or after the 12th century A. D.[60] While we need not dispute the accounts given in the chronicles, which are to some extent corroborated by epigraphy, the chronological absurdities make it difficult to believe that the mission was sent by a little known ruler of Tripurā, especially when we have strong grounds for identifying him with a Kāmarūpa king. Barua, identifying the king with one Chandrapriya, further adds that during the 6th- 7th century A. D., the *Ḍavāka* region was absorbed by Kāmarūpa.[61] But, we shall try to show that, none of his statements appears tenable. N. K. Bhattasali, on the basis of his theory that Balavarman of the Gupta epigraph was ruling in *Ḍavāka*, asserts that the "kings of Kāmarūpa were content to remain satisfied with the modest limits of their kingdom up to the reign of Kumāragupta of the Gupta line and Gaṇapativarman of the Varman line of Assam".[62] He, therefore, contends that *Ḍavāka* remained independent up to the middle of the 6th century A. D., when Kāmarūpa may have put an end to its separate existence, and that it was Bhūtivarman who made himself master of Eastern India, by uniting *Kāmarūpa*, *Ḍavāka* and *Samataṭa* into one kingdom, and who declared his overlordship by the performance of the *Aśvamedha*.[63] The existing evidence does not support the view that the influence of the Guptas remained until the middle of the 6th century

58. K.L. Barua, *J.A.R.S.*, 1935, pp. 92f.
59. *Ibid*, pp. 92-98.
60. *Ibid*, pp. 92-98.
61. *E.H.K.*, p. 47.
62. *I.H.Q.*, XXI, pp. 19f.
63. *E.I.*, 1947, pp. 18-23.

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A.D. and that Bhūtivarman alone was responsible for the unification of *Kāmarūpa*, *Ḍavāka* and other regions. This was done long before the rise of Bhūtivarman, as we shall prove shortly.

The identification of Kalyāṇavarman with Yu Chai, on the basis of epigraphy, seems to rest on a valid ground, and it was he who sometime before the sending of the mission in A. D. 428 conquered *Ḍavāka*. This assumption equally fits in with the chronology of that ruler. It may be that a reigning Tripurā king was ousted from the Kapili valley and Kalyāṇavarman signalised his victory by the incorporation of *Ḍavāka* within Kāmarūpa and sending a diplomatic mission to China. The performance of *Aśvamedha* by a subsequent ruler has nothing to do with this achievement of Kalyāṇavarman.

5. Gaṇapativarman :

Kalyāṇavarman was succeeded by his son, Gaṇapativarman. In view of the uneventful character of his reign, it seems to have been short and he may be placed between A. D. 440- 450. Like the god *Gaṇapati*, he was known for his remarkable charities. He "was endowed with innumerable qualities for the extermination of strife (as *Gaṇapati*) is born to destroy the *Kali* age"[64] In the Doobi grant (vv. 15-16) he is called Gaṇendravarman, who was "a spark to the darkness-like enemy- and like *Gaṇendra* (*Gaṇeśa*) was accomplished and exceptionally brilliant." Nothing important is recorded of his reign, except that he placed his son on the throne in the presence of his subjects,[65] may be due to his old age.

6. Mahendravarman—the first important ruler :

Gaṇapativarman was succeeded by his son Mahendra, whose reign may be placed between A. D. 450-485. This long reign of 35 years is tenable in view of his brilliant career and conquests, evidenced by his performance of two horse sacrifices. The Nidhanpur grant (v. 12) states that "his (Gaṇapati's) queen Yajñavatī brought forth a son, Mahendravarman, as the sacrificial fire (produces) fire, who was the repository of all sacrificial rites (like fire)." The Doobi grant (vv. 17-18) also alludes to his great merit, like that of his father,

64. Nidhanpur grant, *V* 11.
65. Doobi grant, *V* 17.

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who was the equal of *Indra* in strength and protected his people like his own children.

Epigraphs refer to his warlike activities and conquests. According to the Doobi grant (v. 17) he was like "salt to the sore of the enemy." He "conquered the earth with the ocean as her outskirts : (*sāgara-mekhalāntaṁ*), subjugated his enemy through his power, and performed many sacrifices like *Mahendra*."[66] The references are significant; Mahendra was the contemporary of Kumāragupta I who ruled till A.D. 455, and who held sway over Bengal and *Puṇḍravardhana*, as proved by his two Dāmodarpur copper plates of A.D. 444 and 447.[67] But during the latter part of the 5th century A.D., beginning with the reign of Skandagupta 455-467), the imperial Guptas were on the road to decline.[68] It was but natural that Kāmarupa in the east would try to expand towards Bengal, as the Gupta hold became weaker and weaker. The Dāmodarpur plates, Sārnāth inscription and the Erāṇ epigraph of Budhagupta seem to prove that from A.D. 477 to 496, the Gupta empire again revived and extended from Bengal to Eastern Mālwa.[69] But, between the reigns of Kumāragupta I and Budhagupta, there is no evidence of the Gupta hold in Bengal. Mahendravarman, therefore, was able to expand his kingdom at the cost of the Guptas towards the end of the reign of Skandagupta. He was the first ruler of Kāmarūpa who not only shook off the last vestiges of the Gupta influence or allegiance, but also tried to carve out an empire at the cost of his neighbours. The importance of his political career is known from the performance of his two *Aśvamedha* sacrifices. He is described in the Clay Seal of Bhāskara (L 4-5) as the performer of two horse sacrifices : (*Śrī Mahendravarmā dvisturaga-medhāharttā*). This finds partial confirmation in the Nidhanpur grant (v. 12), which describes him as the repository of all sacrificial rites: (*Yajñavidhīnāmāspada*), and in the Doobi grant (v. 19) which states that the king performed many sacrifices. As far as we know, he was the first Kāmarūpa king to perform the *Aśvamedha* sacrifices,[70] indicating his independent status and political influence over his neighbours. In the opinion of D.C. Sircar, the credit

66. *Ibid*, *V* 19.
Reference also may be made to a recently discovered rock-cut inscription of Surendravarman, identified with Mahendravarman, wherein he is said to have dedicated a temple to the Supreme Lord. (Chapter II).

67. Sircar, *Select Inscriptions*, pp. 283-87.

68. Two other grants with G.E. have been found in Baigrām (128=A.D. 448) and in Pāhārpur (159=A.D. 479): see Basak, *E.I.*, XXI, p. 815; Sircar, *Select Inscriptions*, I, pp. 342f; Dikshit, *E.I.*, XX, p. 61f.

69. Raychaudhuri, *P.H.A.I.*, pp. 590f.

70. The Doobi grant credits Vajradatta with the performance of many horse sacrifices. (*V* 4). This is doubtful.

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should not be given to him but to Nārāyaṇavarman who performed the earliest *Avaśmedha* in Kāmarūpa about the middle of the 6th century A.D.[71] B.M. Barua, supporting him, writes that it is not true that Mahendravarman performed two horse sacrifices and was largely responsible for the distress of the Guptas towards the east.[72] But, the text in the Seal makes it clear that it was Mahendra who performed two horse sacrifices. The power of the imperial Guptas declined long before the 6th century A.D. except for a while under Budhagupta and to some extent under Vaiṇya Gupta, and their hold in much of Bengal was no longer strong enough to check the rising power of Kāmarūpa. There was, moreover, no local power at that time in Bengal. The actual significance of the statement in the epigraph that, Mahendravarman extended his kingdom to the sea-shore, can only be understood as implying the extension of the kingdom up to at least south-east Bengal, which he must have signalised by the performance of two horse sacrifices.

It is possible that Mahendravarman came into conflict with Budhagupta, whose occupation of *Puṇḍravardhana* between A.D. 477-497 is proved by his Dāmodarpur Plates;[73] the Kāmarūpa king could not, however, make any headway in North Bengal. But it is likely that Mahendra extended his sway to South-east Bengal, where there is no evidence of Gupta rule until the time of Vaiṇyagupta, whose sway perhaps extended to Tripurā, as proved by his Guṇaighar inscription (G.E. 188=A.D. 507).[74] The extension of the sway of Kāmarūpa to South-east Bengal may have occurred about A.D. 470-80. There is no doubt that Kāmarūpa in the east and the Hūṇas in the north-west and other powers gave a blow to the declining Gupta empire,[75] and Mahendravarman gave a good account of himself by exerting his influence over parts of Bengal. Only a start was given, and, as we shall show, it was Bhūtivarman who actually made extensive conquests in *Puṇḍravardhana* during the middle of the 6th century A.D.

7. Nārāyaṇavarman :

Mahendra was succeeded by his son Nārāyaṇavarman who probably ruled between A.D. 485-510. The Nidhanpur grant (v. 13) states that he

71. *I.H.Q.*, XXI, pp. 143-45.
72. *I.H.Q.*, XXIII, pp. 200f.
73. See *P.H.A.I.*, pp. 590f.
74. Sircar, *Select Inscriptions*, pp. 331f.
75. N.K. Bhattasali, *I.H.Q.*, XXI, pp. 19f

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was born "for the stability (of the rule) of the world, who like Janaka (or his father) was well-versed in the principles of the philosophy of the (Supreme) self". Again : "In her (Suvratā) who was like *Aditi*, *Chakrapāṇi-Nārāyaṇa*, assuming a human form with the same name, became the king, surrounded by Gods, with a view to ending the six-fold demerits of his subjects".[76] The grants, therefore, testify to his many sided qualities and virtuous life, and state that he did sway with the evils of the time by maintaining a comparatively peaceful order in the kingdom. But nothing particular is recorded of his reign.

8. Bhūtivarman—beginning of the period of digvijaya :[77]

The accession of Bhūtivarman, son of Nārāyaṇa during the middle of the 6th century A.D. was a landmark in the early history of Kāmarūpa. Both his own Baḍgaṅgā epigraph and the Nidhanpur Plates bear witness to the new vigour that was added to the kingdom, already growing in importance at the cost of neighbouring powers. On the basis of his epigraph, his reign may be placed between A.D. 510-555. It contains the G.E. 234=A.D. 553-54. D.C. Sircar reads the date as 244[78] which is not possibly correct, as it is distinctly written as 200.30.4.[79] This long reign of about 45 years appears reasonable in view of his most eventful career and conquests in all directions. The grants speak highly of this prince. He was the "sixth *Mahābhūta* (element) as it were, for steady succession of (all) the properties".[80] "From him (Nārāyaṇa) Devavatī generated Mahābhūtavarman of renowned power, for the plenty of the people, as *Kārtikeya*, the abode of wealth, was brought into existence by *Mahādeva* in *Pārvatī*. He was terrible to his enemies, and, like *Indra*, of renowned power and fame;" who, "having ascended the paternal throne, defeated the array of enemy power by dint of his powerful arms".[81]

The mention of his enemies may refer to contests with the Later Guptas, petty chiefs of Southern and Eastern Bengal, and Yaśodharman of Mālwa, who is said to have over-run India up to the river *Lauhitya*.[82] The growing

76. Doobi grant, *V*. 21.
77. While in the *H.C.* (Cowell, pp. 217-18), the Baḍgaṅgā epigraph and the *Nālandā Clay Seal*, he is called Bhūtivarman, in the Doobi and Nidhanpur grants, he is called Mahābhūtavarman (Nālandā Clay Seal, line 6).
78. *J.A.R.S.*, X, pp. 63f.
79. Bhattasali, *J.A.R.S.*, VIII, pp. 138-39; *Bhāratavarṣa*, 1348. (B.S.), pp. 90f.
80. Nidhanpur grant, *V*. 14.
81. Doobi grant, *VV*. 23-25.
82. Fleet, *C.I.I.*, III, pp. 142f (line 4-5).

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importance of the kingdom of Kāmarūpa since the time of Mahendravarman, who extended her frontiers at the cost of the Guptas, and a new bid for supremacy by Bhūtivarman, must have drawn the attention of any ruler of Northern India who aspired after imperial sway in the manner of the imperial Guptas. After Budhagupta and Vaiṇyagupta, the imperial Guptas rapidly declined and an effective blow was given to them by Yaśodharman.[83] He is said to have conquered lands "which the command of chiefs of the Hūṇas—failed to penetrate". "He, before whose feet, chieftains, having (their) courage removed by the strength of (his) arms, bowed down, from the neighbourhood of the (river) *Lauhitya* : (*ālauhityopakaṇṭhāt*) up to (the mountain) *Mahendra*, the lands at the foot of which are impenetrable through the groves of trees, (and) from *Himalaya* (the mountain of snow), the table-lands of which are embraced by the (river) *Gaṅgā*, up to the Western ocean, by which (all) the divisions of the earth are made of various hues through the intermingling of the rays of the jewels of the locks of hair, on the tops of (their heads)."[84] The epigraph, found at Mandaśor, is dated in the Mālava era 589=A.D. 532-33. The rise of Yaśodharman, the conqueror of the Hūṇa chief Mihirakula some time before A.D. 532-33., was contemporary, as we have stated, with the decline of the Guptas not only in Bengal but also in Magadha. In Assam, his contemporary was almost certainly Bhūtivarman,

The contention of N.N. Vasu that Yaśodharman conquered Kāmarūpa about A.D. 534, when he was opposed by Chandramukhavarman,[85] the son of Bhūtivarman, is unlikely in view of the dated Baḍgaṅgā epigraph of Bhūtivarman (A.D. 553-54). Whether we take Yaśodharman's claim of conquests to be genuine or otherwise, the reference to kings from the neighbourhood of the *Lauhitya* bowing before him, does not necessarily imply the actual invasion of Kāmarūpa, much less its conquest. He might have made some conquests in Bengal. "There is no reason to believe," rightly remarks D.C. Sircar, "that Yaśodharman actually conquered the whole of India from the Himalayas to the Mahendra and from the bank of the Brahmaputra to the Arabian sea".[86] So, most of his conquests may be taken as poetic exaggeration. In any case, the hypothetical invasion of Yaśodharman is to be ascribed to the reign of Bhūtivarman, and it did not result in any loss of Kāmarūpa territory; on the contrary, as evidenced by the Nidhanpur grant, it was Bhūtivarman,

83. R.C. Majumdar, *History of Bengal*, I, *pp*. 50-51.
84. Fleet, *C.I.I.*, III, pp. 142f. lines 4-5.
85. *Social History of Kāmarūpa*, 1, p. 144.
86. *Select Inscriptions* I, pp. 393f; *J.R.A.S.B.*, V, pp. 407f.

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who, shortly after the onslaughts of the invader, conquered territories in *Puṇḍravardhana* to the west of *Triśrotā* between A.D. 545-50.

In both the Doobi and Nidhanpur plates of Bhāskara there are references to the confirmation of a donation of land, made by Bhūtivarman in *Mayūraśālmalāgrahāra* in *Chandrapurī viṣaya*. To the east of the donated land lay the dried river *Kauśikā* and another stream, the *Gaṅgiṇikā* made its western boundary. In the Tezpur grant of Vanamāla, however, lands granted in *Chandrapurī* are definitely localised as lying to the west of the *Triśrotā* (*Teestā*).[87] The Nidhanpur grant has raised a long controversy regarding the location of the land in question. The difficulty lies in the fact that the grant was found not in Bengal, but in Pañcakhaṇḍa in Sylhet. The land is definitely mentioned as lying in *Mayūraśālmala* in *Chandrapurī*, not only in the said grant, but also in the Doobi grant, and Vanamāla during the 9th century A.D. donated lands somewhere in the same area.

Disputing the location of the land in Bengal, J.C. Ghosh places it in Pañcakhaṇḍa in Sylhet and identifies *Kauśikā* with Kuśiārā and *Chandrapurī* with a modern village in that locality, named Chāndpur.[88] Referring to *Chandraparī* (*Chandrapurī*) of the grant of Vanamāla, which is said to lie to the west of *Teestā*, Ghosh holds that we need not go to the west of the *Triśrotā* when we can find one nearer to the place in Sylhet. Besides, *Chandrapurī* of the Tezpur grant is not stated to be a *viṣaya*.[89] Disputing P. Bhattacharya's identification of Yuan Chwang's *Shihlichatolo* with Sylhet, Ghosh holds that the latter was included within the kingdom of Bhāskara. This he writes under the impression that the Nidhanpur grant was issued after the pilgrim left India, which is evidently wrong. "Besides this", he writes, "the tradition is in favour of placing Sylhet within the kingdom of Kāmarūpa."[90] He further adds that Sylhet was not under a Tippera king in A.D. 641 and holds that the modern Pañcakhaṇḍa in Sylhet might have originated with the Brāhmaṇas who were granted lands by Bhūtivarman.[91] In short, Ghosh asserts that Bhūtivarman donated lands in Sylhet. This is also supported by P. L. Paul[92] and A. Roy.[93] Ghosh finds further evidence of the location of the land in Sylhet and Bhāskara's occupation of the region in a place-name called *Bhāskarateṅgerī*, which is also found in the Bhātera grant of Govinda

87. *J.A.S.B.*, IX, II, pp. 766f (last plate).
88. See *Śrīhaṭṭer Itivṛtta*. Pt. IV. (f.n.), p. 74.
89. *I.H.Q.*, VI, pp. 60-71.
90. See also *Śrīhaṭṭer Itivṛtta*, II, I, pp. 8-11.
91. *I.H.Q.*, VI, pp. 60-71.
92. *Early History of Bengal*, p. 26.
93. *I.C.*, I, pp. 698f.

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Keśava Deva (A.D. 1049).[94] The name of the place Pañcakhaṇḍa in Sylhet is not an ancient one; it is pointed out that it was given to a group of five Pargaṇās in the early Mogul period. A.C. Chaudhury holds that before the coming of the Brāhmaṇas to Pañcakhaṇḍa, it was known as *Tiṅgair*, which, according to him, is a Kuki word.[95] Ghosh disputes this; the word stands, in his opinion, for *sthala*, a hilly region, and was the name of a part of Pañcakhaṇḍa. He presumes that this *Teṅgerī* in Pañcakhaṇḍa was known as *Bhāskarateṅgerī* in memory of Bhāskara and that the donated land lay there. He identifies the *Kauśikā* with the river Kuśiārā, which name according to K.M. Gupta, is derived from two names. *Kośikā* and *Barāk* (*Kośi* and *Barā*)=Kuśiārā.[96]

Dr. Bhandarkar supports Ghosh's identification and the location of the land in Sylhet. The western boundary of the kingdom of Bhūtivarman, he holds, could hardly have extended to North Bengal or the district of Purnea; beacause at that time the imperial Guptas were masters of those regions. He concludes that even at a later period, Bhāskara's kingdom did not extend so far as to include Purnea.[97] But the rise of Bhūtivarman is to be ascribed to the middle of the 6th century A.D. when Gupta power had almost or wholly disappeared, and the *Nālandā Clay Seal* shows that Bhāskara's sway probably extended as far as the *Nālandā* region. N.K. Bhattasali, also locating the land in Sylhet, contends that the present Pañcakhaṇḍa was the *Mayūraśālmalāgrahāra*, created by Bhūtivarman. He identifies the headquarters of the *Chandrapurī viṣaya* with the flourishing village of Chāndpur, on the left bank of the modern Kuśiārā. He adds that the Brāhmaṇas of Sylhet still remember the tradition that Pañcakhaṇḍa was donated by a king of Tripurā in A.D. 641. It is impossible, in his opinion, for a Tripurā king, to have occupied the region at this time; so he substitutes the name of Bhāskara in place of the king of Tripurā.[98] But, we shall try to show that none of Bhattasali's contentions can be substantiated by any genuine evidence.

The find-spot of a grant does not prove that the donated land was in the same place. The Kamauli grant of Vaidyadeva, a later king of Kāmarūpa, was found in Banaras, and this does not prove that the donated land was also there. That the land donated by Bhūtivarman lay to the west of the *Kauśikā* and *Triśrotā* and to the east of the Gaṅgiṇikā is clear

94. *E.I.*, XIX, pp. 277f.
95. *Śrīhaṭṭer Itivṛtta.* II, I, p. 131.
96. *I.C.*, II, pp. 153-57; K.M. Gupta, *Some Castes and Caste Origin in Sylhet, A.C.R.*, 1931, App. C., p. xxii-xxvii.
97. *I.A.*, LXVI, pp. 41-55, 61-72; *Review of Barua's E.H.K.,I.C.*, I, pp. 136-37.
98. *J.A.S.B.*, (Letters), I, pp. 419-27.

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from the grant itself, and it was in *Mayūraśālmalāgrahāra* in the *Chandrapurī viṣaya*.[99] In the Khālimpur grant of the Gauḍa ruler, Dharmapāla, land is said to have been granted in a place called *Māḍhāśālmalī*. It is possible that *Mayūraśālmala* stands for *Māḍhāśālmalī*,[100] and in that case Bhūtivarman's donated land was in the *Puṇḍravardhana bhukti*.[101] N.N. Dasgupta is right in holding that this *bhukti* or "a part of it which included the *Mayūraśālmala* tract came to be occupied by Bhūtivarman shortly after Budhagupta had ceased to reign". But he is probably wrong when he contends that "a part or rather the eastern part of what was *Puṇḍravardhana* had always been a component part of the kingdom of (Kāmarūpa) in those times, is a presumption that may be safely discarded", and that since this region was under the Guptas in A.D. 543-44, after Bhūtivarman, it was lost to the Kāmarūpa kings.[102] But we shall show that the region was occupied by Bhūtivarman shortly after A.D. 543-44 and continued to remain under Kāmarūpa under Bhāskara, who may have re-occupied it after a temporary loss during the time of his father Susthitavarman.

It is rightly pointed out by P. Bhattacharya that *Mayūraśālmala* was situated in a plain, rather than in a hilly region like that of Pañcakhaṇḍa in Sylhet; *Gaṅgiṇikā* cannot be identified with the stream, known in Sylhet as *Gāṅginā*, and *Chandrapurī* can hardly be identified with Chāndpur in Sylhet, since the inscriptions point strongly to those places being in a district between the Kośi and the Teestā. P. Bhattacharya further tries to prove that the donated land could not have been in Sylhet, as Yuan Chwang refers to *Shihlichatolo* as a separate kingdom.[103] The identification of this place with Sylhet is disputed by Finot who locates it in Prome in Burma,[104] and Watters, who believes that it was Tripurā.[105] That it is not Tripurā, is proved by the fact that the pilgrim mentions the latter as *Kia-mo-lang-kia*.[106] The identification of the place with Sylhet is based on the geography of the regions given by the pilgrim.[107] But, as we shall show, the mere separate mention of Sylhet cannot exclude the possibility

99. Nidhanpur grant, lines 128-132.
100. P. Bhattacharya, *K.S.*, p. 5; *E.I.*, XII, pp. 243f; also *Gauḍalekhamālā*, pp. 15f.
101. N.N. Dasgupta, *I.C.*, II, pp. 37-45.
102. *I.C.*, II, pp. 37-45.
103. *J.R.A.S.*, 1920, pp. 1-19.
104. *J.R.A.S.*, 1920, pp. 447-525; also Beal, II, 199-200.
105. *Yuan Chwang*, II, p. 188.
106. S.N. Majumdar, *Cunningham's Ancient Geography of India*, p. 576.
107. *Life*, p. 132. This identification is also supported by Martin, Cunningham, S.N. Majumdar and others: (S. N. Majumdar, *Cunningham's Ancient Geography of India*, p. 576).

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of the inclusion of the place within Kāmarūpa during Bhāskara's time or during the reign of Bhūtivarman.

In the opinion of P. Bhattacharya again, the independent status of Sylhet is proved by an inscription of about A.D. 600, where is found written '*Śrīhaṭṭādhīśvarebhyaḥ*'. The reference is very doubtful. It is in the *praśasti* of the temple of *Lakhā Maṇḍala* at *Maḍhā* in Jaunsār Bawār. It records the dedication of a temple of *Śiva* (v. 20) by Īśvarā, who belonged to the royal race of Siṁhapura, for the spiritual welfare of her dead husband; he was Śrī Chandragupta, son of a king of Jālandhara. The *praśasti* is placed between A.D. 600-800. Above the *praśasti* in the centre there are some irregular letters, probably of a later date, which seem to read: *Śrīhaṭṭādhīśvarebhyaḥ*'.[108] The epithet has nothing to do with Sylhet, for both Siṁhapura and Jālandhara lay in the Punjab.[109] It is likely that it stands for the supreme lord, *Śiva*, the presiding deity of *Śrīhaṭṭa*, for whom the temple was erected by Īśvarādevī. The name *Śrīhaṭṭa* is derived from *Haṭakeśvara Śiva*, who is said to have been worshipped by the Nāgar Brāhmaṇas originally in the region about Kāśmīra.[110] In any case, the expression may best be taken to have a religious import rather than a political one, and it has nothing to do with the independent status of Sylhet, during either the reign of Bhūtivarman or that of Bhāskara.

In order to strengthen his theory of the separate political status of Sylhet, Bhattacharya further holds that the *Yoginī Tantra* and the *Sādhanāmālā* mention it as a separate kingdom and that the substitution of Bhāskara for the Tripurā king, who, according to local tradition, held sway over Pañcakhaṇḍa in A.D. 641, is quite unjustified. He associates the name Pañcakhaṇḍa with the five Brāhmaṇa families, who were brought there by a Tripurā king; one of these was of the *Kātyāyana gotra*, the descendants of Manorathasvāmī, who took possession of the Nidhanpur plates and brought them to Sylhet.[111] Bhattacharya is thus of the opinion that the *sāmpradāyika* Brāhmaṇas of Sylhet, claiming to have migrated from Mithilā were the descendants of Brāhmaṇas who came to Sylhet with the copper plates.[112] All these arguments prove, according to Bhattacharya, that "Sylhet fell within the spiritual boundary of sacred Kāmarūpa, but was independent of it politically".[113] Vanamāla, he

108. Bühler, *E.I.*, 1, pp. 10-12.
109. *Ibid.*
110. J.C. Ghosh, *I.H.Q.*, VI, pp. 67-71; *A.B.O.R.I.*, XVII, pp. 385-86; D. R. Bhandarkar, *I.A.*, XL, pp. 32f; *Ibid*, LXVI, pp. 41-55, 61-72,
111. *J.A.S.B.*, (letters) III , pp. 45-51.
112. *Ibid*; Review of Gait's History of Assam, *I.H.Q.*, III, pp. 839-41.
113. *J.A.S.B.*, (letters) III, pp. 45-51.

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points out, donated lands in *Chandrapurī* which was in Rangpur in North Bengal; the donated lands of Bhūtivarman, therefore, should be located in Rangpur. N.K. Bhattasali's identification of *Gaṅgiṇikā* and *śuṣka Kauśikā* with the dead Kuśiārā in Sylhet, as Bhattacharya rightly points out, is wrong, and the '*ḍumbarīcchedas*' of the Nidhanpur grant do not stand for tanks somewhere in Sylhet.[114] But, we need not discuss the question of the independent status of Sylhet to prove that the donated land of Bhūtivarman was not there; several factors combine to show that it was in *Puṇḍravardhana*. The strongest argument in this regard is the reference to the *Chandrapurī viṣaya*, which, as we have stated, lay to the west of the *Triśrotā* or Teestā. This is definitely mentioned in the grant of Vanamāla, and therefore, the land must have been in *Puṇḍravardhana*. The omission of the river *Triśrotā* in the Nidhanpur grant is only incidental. Bhattacharya's theory of the independent status of Sylhet is based on later works and traditions, and is not proved by any reliable source. His theory of the origin of the Nāgar Brāhmaṇas and Kāyasthas, based on the connection of the donees of the Nidhanpur grant, who are said to have migrated from Mithilā and other places, may perhaps be explained, as we have shown in another connection, by their common Alpine origin, and they might have flooded Eastern India long before the Vedic Brāhmaṇas. If this be true, then Bhattacharya's theory of the later migration of Brāhmaṇas from one place to another does not hold good; because Kāmarūpa or even Sylhet was such an Alpine centre from early times. It is, however, difficult to explain when and how the plates were brought to Pañcakhaṇḍa in Sylhet; but it was definitely after the land was donated in Bengal and the origin of the name Pañcakhaṇḍa also is to be attributed to a later period.

As rightly pointed out by K.L. Barua, the identification of *Chandrapurī* seems to rest on the ancient geography of the region and the true interpretation of the grant. The river Kuśiārā, he writes, cannot be identified with the *śuṣka Kauśikā* or the *Gaṅgiṇikā*. It is fantastic, he adds, to suppose on the basis of the existence of a bill (tank), *Chotagāṅg*, and a village Chāndpur, that the land was donated in Sylhet. He identifies *Kauśikā* with the modern Kośi. The name of the river in Sylhet is Kuśiārā and not Kauśiyārā, and it is presumed that Kuśiārā is derived from *kuiāra* (sugar cane).[115] Speaking of the traditional king of Tripurā who in A.D. 641 is said to have donated lands in Pañcakhaṇḍa to a number of Brāhmaṇas in Sylhet, Barua contends that this fact proves that the land donated by

114. *J.A.R.S.*, IV, pp. 58-66.
115. K.L. Barua, *I.C.*, I. pp. 421-32.

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either Bhūtivarman or Bhāskara was not within Sylhet; because it was not possible for a Kāmarūpa king to donate lands within the sway of a Tripurā king. It may be, he further adds, that some of the Brāhmaṇas imported by the Tripurā king were the descendants of some of the donees of the Nidhanpur grant.[116] But , in our opinion, it is unsafe to rely on a tradition, not supported by epigraphy or any genuine source, and it is unnecessary to lend support to such a tradition in order to prove that the donated land was not in Pañcakhaṇḍa, when we have definite proof in the grant itself of its location in Bengal. We shall show that both during the time of Bhūtivarman and Bhāskara, Kāmarūpa held sway over both Sylhet and Tripurā.

The location of the land, as given in the grant, does not, however, help us to fix the exact boundaries of the plot, except that it was donated in *Chandrapurī*. But, as we have stated on the basis of the Tezpur grant of Vanamāla, the land lay to the west of the *Triśrotā* or Teestā. It is, therefore, evident that the land donated by Bhūtivarman also lay to the west of the Teestā. The area of the land is not definitely known; but on the basis of the number of donees (205 Brāhmaṇas), it is reasonable to hold that it covered a vast area. It is also clear from the boundaries of the grant that the land lay to the west of the *Kauśikā*, the identification of which is difficult. In the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* (Chaps. 57f), the name of the river is given as both *Kauśikā* and *Kauśiki*, which is taken to stand for modern Kośi.[117] The *śuṣka Kauśikā* of the grant is taken by K.L. Barua as the Burhi or '*Marā*' (dead) Kośi, indicated in Buchanan's Map of 1809, and on the basis of this, he locates the land in the modern district of Purnea or in Morung to the north.[118] P. Bhattacharya, disputing this, holds that some dried bed of the Kośi in Bihar could not have been the *śuṣka Kauśikā*, but he maintains that it was in Kāmarūpa, which was bounded on the west by the *Kauśikā*.[119] This is refuted by Barua. "It is sufficient for our purpose", he remarks, "that the Kośi had some dried-up beds till the time of Dr. Buchanan, to the east of the present river and that one of them was probably the *śuṣka Kauśikā* mentioned in the inscription."[120] The identification of *śuṣka Kauśikā* with some dried branch or tributary of the present Kośi appears probable; but, through which district it flowed at that time, is not mentioned in the grant.

116. K.L. Barua, '*Nāgar Brāhmaṇas & Sylhet*— A Rejoinder', *I.C.*, I, pp. 701-02.
117. Barua, *I.C.*, II, pp. 139-40; *E.H.K.*, p. 51.
118. *Ibid.*
119. *I.C.*, II, pp. 167-70.
120. *I.C.*, II, p. 171.

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In the opinion of Barua, prior to the invasion of Yaśodharman, Bhūtivarman crossed the *Karatoyā* and conquered a part of Eastern Mithilā and Morung and made the land grants as a token of his triumph. He further holds that this portion of the territory remained under Kāmarūpa until the time of Susthitavarman, when Mahāsenagupta invaded Kāmarūpa, defeated the former and occupied the area; that Bhāskara occupied a portion of Eastern Mithilā is confirmed by his assistance to the Chinese mission with troops, which could not have been led through a hostile territory. On these grounds, Barua asserts that the donated land lay in Purnea in Bihar and that Sylhet was not within Kāmarūpa.[121] We shall examine the conquests of Bhāskara in another place; but it is very doubtful whether Bhūtivarman could extend his territory up to Bihar. It is a far cry from Sylhet to North Bengal and thence to Bihar. That the donated land lay in *Puṇḍravardhana* to the west of the Teestā and the east of the Kośi, cannot be disputed. It is, however, doubtful whether the dried river *Kauśikā* can be identified with the modern Kośi. It may be that since the name *Kauśikā* is evidently a dimunitive, the Kośi had at that time a tributary with the name *Kauśikā*, in which case, the land can broadly be located between the rivers Kośi and Teestā. The *Puṇḍravardhana bhukti* itself comprised a great area or at least the whole of North Bengal, and it is likely that the land lay in the region of modern Dinājpur, on the border of Bengal and Bihar.

Our above contention is based on the following consideration: That the Gupta power so declined before the middle of the 6th century AD.. as to lose hold of Bihar, is very doubtful; nor is it likely that Bhūtivarman could conquer up to Purnea by A.D. 525 before the invasion of Yaśodharman in A.D. 533-34, as asserted by K.L. Barua.[122] Bhūtivarman's conquests in *Puṇḍravardhana* cannot be placed before the exploits of Yaśodharman, or earlier than A.D. 545-50; bacause during A.D. 543-44, ten years after Yaśodharman's invasion, the governor of a Gupta "*Paramabhaṭṭāraka-Mahārājādhirāja-Pṛthivīpati*" was ruling in *Puṇḍravardhana*.[123] That the Later Guptas between A.D. 510-554 were ruling over some parts of Magadha, if not Gauḍa, is proved by epigraphy; they were Kṛṣṇagupta, Harṣagupta, Jīvita and Kumāragupta III and the latter was the contemporary of Īśāṇavarman Maukhari, known from the Harāhā grant of A.D. 554.[124] The genealogy of these princes is also found in the Aphsad epigraph of Ādityasena, and one of them, either Jīvita or Kumāragupta III,

121. *I.C.*, I, pp. 421-432; Barua holds a different view elsewhere: (*E.H.K.*, pp. 87-89).
122. *E.H.K.*, pp. 49f.
123. *E.I.*, XVII, p. 193; Sircar, *Select Ins.*, I, pp. 337f; H.C. Raychaudhuri, *P.H.A.I.*, p. 598.
124. H.P. Śāstrī, *E.I.*, XIV, pp. 110f.

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in the opinion of H.C. Raychaudhuri, may be identified with the king, mentioned in the Dāmodarpur plates.[125] In the Harāhā epigraph, Jīvitagupta is said to have come into contact with the haughty foes, living in the sea-shore, and he is said in the Aphsad epigraph to have "churned that formidable milk ocean, the cause of the attainment of fortune, which was the army of the shining Īśāṇavarman, a very moon among kings".[126] This seems to refer to contests of these kings with some petty rulers of western and southern Bengal,[127] where independent kingdoms were founded during the first half of the 6th century A.D.[128] These kings were Dharmāditya, known from Faridpur grant;[129] Gopachandra, known from Faridpur grant;[130] Vijayasena, known from Mallasārul grant[131] and Samāchāradeva;[132] but their sway did not reach North Bengal.

In view of the sway of the Guptas over North Bengal as late as A.D. 543-44, therefore, it appears improbable that Bhūtivarman conquered it, not to speak of Bihar, before this date. It may be suggested that either Jīvitagupta or Kumāragupta III came into conflict with Bhūtivarman after the invasion of Yaśodharman. But it is wrong to hold, as done by Basak,[133] and others, that it was only after the disappearance of the Imperial Guptas, to whom Kāmarūpa was bound by a tie of subordinate alliance since the time of Samudragupta, that Bhūtivarman succeeded in assuming virtual independence and bringing other rulers under his authority, and that after him the next five generations of rulers, having freed themselves from the Gupta allegiance, appear to have ruled in Kāmarūpa with the same status as the Maukharis and the Later Guptas. In fact, the Gupta allegiance was long broken most probably by Mahendravarman, and after Kalyāṇavarman's occupation of Ḍavāka and the outlying regions, Sylhet and Tripurā may have remained in subordinate alliance to Kāmarūpa which was perhaps continued under Mahendravarman, who made fresh conquests, probably in South-east Bengal. It is, therefore, not established, as believed by D.C. Sircar, that the long political influence of the Guptas over Kāmarūpa was only ended by Bhūtivarman.[134] It is equally wrong

125. *P.H.A.I.*, pp. 600-601.
126. *C.I.I.*, III, pp. 203f.
127. Raychaudhuri, *P.H.A.I.*, pp. 602f.
128. Majumdar, *History of Bengal*, I, pp. 50-54; Sircar, *Select Inscriptions*, I., pp. 350-360.
129. *I.A.*, XXXIX, pp. 195f; *J.R.A.S.*, 1912, pp. 710f.
130. *I.A.*, XXXIX, p. 204.
131. N.G. Majumdar, *E.I.*, XXIII, pp. 159f.
132. Majumdar, *History of Bengal*, I, pp. 50-54.
133. *H.N.E.I.*, p. 215.
134. *I.H.Q.*, 1950, XXXVI, pp. 241-46; '*The Maukharis & the Later Guptas*', *J.R.A.S.B.*, XI, pp. 69-74.

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to hold with N.K. Bhattasali that only Bhūtivarman made himself master of Eastern India by welding together *Ḍavāka* and *Kāmarūpa* into one kingdom and declared his lordship over them by the performance of the *Aśvamedha*.[135] This political supremacy was long asserted by Kāmarūpa; but it is unlikely that Bhūtivarman could make himself the master of the whole of Eastern India as did Bhāskara. D.C. Sircar is probably wrong when he contends that it was Bhūtivarman who by the performance of the *Aśvamedha* assumed the imperial status after breaking off the subordinate alliance of the Guptas. "We are thus inclined to believe", writes Sircar, "that the seven generations of Kāmarūpa kings beginning with Puṣyavarman—were subsidiary allies of the contemporary Gupta emperors, viz., Samudragupta and his successors, and that Bhūtivarman re-established the fallen fortunes of the family".[136] This statement of the writer appears to us inconclusive.

As we have already shown, Kalyāṇavarman united *Ḍavāka* and *Kāmarūpa* between A.D. 420-40, perhaps after defeating a Tripurā king ,and Mahendra may have exerted his influence over Tripurā, Sylhet and possibly over some portions of what was known as *Samataṭa* between A.D. 450-85. It was during their reigns that the Gupta influence was finally removed. A new impetus to the scheme of conquest was given by Bhūtivarman, as a result of which Kāmarūpa was extended to *Puṇḍravardhana*. The find-spot of his Baḍgaṅgā epigraph, in Nowgong near *Ḍavāka*, can be explained by his fresh consolidation of conquests in the eastern direction and in the south-west, by which he probably brought Sylhet, Tripurā and other regions under his sway; these regions remained under Bhāskara in the 7th century A.D. N.K. Bhattasali points out that *Samataṭa*, including the entire regions enclosed within the lower part of the old Brahmaputra and the hills of Assam and Tripurā (i.e. the eastern part of present Mymensingh, an eastern strip of Dacca, and the entire districts of Noakhali, Tripurā, Sylhet and Cāchār) passed on to Bhūtivarman soon after A.D. 508; Bhattasali further adds that his successors were not only able to keep their hold on *Samataṭa* for four generations but also that during Bhāskara's time, the kingdom included the whole of Eastern India.[137] The statement appears to be an exaggeration in view of the fact that during the 6th century A.D. there were independent kingdoms in Southern Bengal.[138] It appears likely that some portions of South-east Bengal were occupied by Bhūtivarman. We shall examine the conquests of Bhāskara to show whether or not he could claim to be the emperor of Eastern India.

135. *E.I.*, 1947, pp. 18-23; also *J.A.R.S.*, VIII, pp. 138-39.
136. *J.A.R.S.*, X, pp. 63-77.
137. *J.A.R.S.*, X, pp. 63-77.
138. See D.C. Sircar (*I.H.Q.*, XXI, pp. 143f), who disputes Bhattasali's contention.

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The importance of the conquests made, and the extension of the kingdom under Bhūtivarman becomes evident from his Baḍgaṅgā epigraph, which refers to his performance of a horse sacrifice.[139] We must admit that in ancient India the *Aśvamedha* was sometimes performed even by rulers of minor importance; but in the case of Bhūtivarman, it had perhaps a special significance. As given in the Nidhanpur grant, he had a circle of feudatories and could captivate the whole of Kāmarūpa by his benign glance: (*ikṣaṇajita-Kāmarūpaṁ*).[140] D.C. Sircar doubts whether the credit of the performance of the *Aśvamedha* should be given to Bhūtivarman, and further adds that it was Nārāyaṇavarman and not Mahendra who performed two horse sacrifices. "Is it then possible", Sircar writes, "to suggest that the second of the horse sacrifices assigned here to Nārāyaṇavarman, was celebrated when that king was too old and his son Bhūtivarman was ruling the country on his father's behalf, and that this was the reason why Bhūtivarman is said to be a performer of the *Aśvamedha* in a record of his reign ?"[141] This statement is possibly based on the Nidhanpur grant, which does not give the credit of an *Aśvamedha* to Bhūtivarman. But, in the Doobi grant (v. 25) an *Aśvamedha* sacrifice is ascribed to him. Hence Sircar's contention cannot be justified.

As the Baḍgaṇgā epigraph is recorded in A.D. 553-54, Bhūtivarman's conquests in *Puṇḍravardhana* may be placed about A.D. 550, when the Gupta hold declined in Bengal. The find-spot of the epigraph in Nowgong indicates his conquests in the eastern directions. The decay of the Gupta power left the ruler of the rising kingdom of Kāmarūpa a free hand to launch his scheme of conquests. The donation of the land in North Bengal was but the testimony to his triumph in that direction. The policy of making land grants to Brāhmaṇas in and around Kāmarūpa was another proof of the king's patronage of learning and education. Bhūtivarman's victories not only made him master of North Bengal, and the outlying regions of *Samataṭa*, Tripurā, Sylhet, Cāchār, *Ḍavāka*, including greater portions of modern Assam in the east, but also laid the foundation of the future greatness of Bhāskara.

9. Chandramukhavarman :

The son of Bhūtivarman, Chandramukha may have ascended the throne in about A.D. 555, and, according to our system of chronology,

139. *E.I.*, 1947, pp. 18-23.
140. *K.S.*, p. 27 (f.n. 8).
141. *I.H.Q.*, XXI, pp. 143f.

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he may have ruled till A.D. 565. This short reign of 10 years only is reasonable in view of the fact that he abdicated in favour of his son.

He is said to have possessed personal charms by which he could captivate the hearts of all and to have ruled his subjects wisely. The Doobi grant refers to him as the best of kings, the illustrious, who attracted the city damsels, who was wise and charming, and who ruled his kingdom like the sun with brilliant lustre and was a source of delight to his subjects and himself happy and gay.[142]

The Doobi grant (v. 30) refers to his fight with his enemies and the extension of the kingdom to the sea-shore. He lawfully broke "the pride of the powerful enemies—conquered the earth with ocean as her girdle and frequently performed sacrifices." The statements are, however, vague. These may refer to his consolidation of conquests in South-east Bengal after the defeat of local chiefs; alternatively, it is possible that he came into conflict with the Maukharis and the Later Guptas, who were struggling during this period for supremacy in Magadha and Gauḍa.[143]

It appears from the Doobi grant (vv. 29-31) that his son, Sthitavarman, was associated with the administration, and when the latter grew up and finished his education, he (Sthitavarman) was placed on the throne. This evidently refers to Chandramukha's voluntary abdication in favour of his son.

10. Sthitavarman :

The son of Chandramukha and Bhogavatī,[144] Sthitavarman may have reigned between A.D. 565-85. In view of his eventful reign and the performance of two horse sacrifices, this period of 20 years appears probable. The Doobi grant (v. 33) makes an important mention of his *abhiṣeka* on his accession. It was performed according to the injunctions of the *śāstras*. This is the first recorded instance of the Vedic coronation ceremony of a Kāmarūpa ruler. He did away with all the causes of disorder in his kingdom. The Doobi grant (v 34) states that "in his capital city, which surpasses the city of Indra in beauty, blemishes like theft, famine, epidemic, oppressions, etc., were removed" by him. It may be suggested that Chandramukha's easy going career was responsible for

142. *VV* 26-28; Nidhanpur grant, V 15.

143. It is possible that Chandramukhavarman came into conflict with Kumāragupta III or his son and Īśāṇavarman Maukhari: (see H.C. Raychaudhuri, *P.H.A.I.*, pp. 602-5).

144. Nidhanpur grant, *V* 16.

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disorder in the kingdom, which was ended by the strong hand of Sthitavarman. The noble ancestry of the king and his knowledge of the *śāstras* are also mentioned in the epigraph. "Just as the moon makes the mountain caves gloomy and dark, so also the other kings were put to shame by him". "He was a moon to the lotus-like enemy, born in the line of the *Bhaumas*, with firm knowledge of different *śāstras*, well-versed in the Vedas, with a renowned lineage."[145]

Important allusions are made to his feudatory rulers and to the building of a city on the bank of the Brahmaputra. "Of him, the self-controlled, the feet assumed the beauty of land-lotuses, turning red by the radiance of the gems at the diadem of the tributary kings bowing down. The illustrious king, Sthitavarman by name, built in his kingdom a city on the bank of the Brahmaputra, with his friends and followers".[146] The city may have been an extension of Prāgjyotiṣa; but the feudatories are unknown, though they may have been rulers of Sylhet, Cāchār, Tripurā, Ḍavāka or even of South-east Bengal.

Another significant fact, mentioned in the *Nālandā Clay Seal* (L 7), is his performance of two horse sacrifices : (*dviraśvamedhayājī Śrī Sthiravarmā*). It is possible that during the early part of his reign, the feudatories in the eastern fringe of the kingdom and South-east Bengal rose in rebellion, but he celebrated his victory over them by the performance of the first *Aśvamedha* in about A.D. 570; it is also possible that the sons of Īśānavarman Maukhari and the Later Guptas who were struggling for supremacy in Magadha and probably in Gauḍa,[147] harassed Sthitavarman in North Bengal, when the latter tried to extend his power to the frontiers of Bengal and Magadha in about A.D. 575-80. The limits of Kāmarūpa in *Puṇḍravardhana* were probably kept intact, and the victory of Sthitavarman was celebrated by his performance of the second *Aśvamedha* by A.D. 580. If these surmises be correct, the chronology suggested for Sthitavarman (A.D. 565-85) appears to be tenable. This victory of Kāmarūpa at the cost of the Later Guptas probably explains the invasion of Mahāsenagupta during the reign of Susthitavarman, which may be placed between A.D. 585-92 or even later. N.K. Bhattasali rightly remarks that

145. Doobi grant, *VV* 34, 38.
146. Doobi grant, *V* 37.
147. See *P.H.A.I.*, pp. 605f. Dāmodaragupta, son of Kumāragupta III is said to have continued the struggle with Maukharis, started by Īśāṇa and Kumāragupta III. The Maukhari opponent of Dāmodara was either Sūryavarman or Śarvavarman (sons of Īśāṇa). As a result of their contest the supremacy over Magadha passed into the hands of the Maukharis: (*C.I.I.*, III, pp. 216f).

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the performance of two horse sacrifices by Mahendra, one by Bhūtivarman, and two others by Sthitavarman indicates the growing prosperity of the ruling family of Kāmarūpa,[148] which, as we shall see, temporarily declined during Susthitavarman's reign.

11. Susthitavarman :

The son of Sthitavarman, Susthita is called Susthira in the *Nālandā Clay Seal* of Bhāskara and Mṛgāṅka in the *Harṣacarita*, which describes him as a "splendid hero, famous in the world as Mṛgāṅka: great grandson of Mahārāja Bhūtivarman, grandson of Chandramukhavarman and son of Sthitavarman, who wore the unshaken majesty of *Kailāsa*" and "took away the conch-shells of the lords of the armies, not their jewels; grasped the stability of the earth, not its tribute; seized the majesty of monarchs, not their hardness".[149] The Nidhanpur grant (vv 17-19) records in the same strain: "From that king (Sthitavarman) of unfathomable nature, of innumerable gems, and the spouse of the (Goddess) *Lakṣmī*, was born Śri Mṛgāṅka, who had no blemish, just as the moon, free from spots, is born from the milky ocean, whose substance is unfathomable, whose pearls cannot be counted, and from which *Lakṣmī* was produced—who held the kingdom in his own hand and was known as Śrī Mṛgāṅka. By whom was given away to supplicants, as if it were (a clod of) earth, that shining *Lakṣmī*, whom *Hari* like a mirror bears with joy in his bosom". The Doobi grant (vv 39-40) further testifies to his accomplishments. He was like "*Indra* on this earth, born for uplift, like the highest virtue, born of the company of the honest, like vast knowledge born of the study of the Vedas, like the great *Agni* in the sacrifice". His mother "was always made happy by illustrious Susthitavarman, with the brilliance of the full moon, just like *Gaurī* by *Kārtikeya*, *Aditi* by *Indra*, *Devakī* by Lord *Kṛṣṇa*, the enemy of the demons".

There is mention of the enemies, defeated by him both in the *Harṣacarita*, already quoted, and in the Doobi grant (v 41) which records that his "feet were illumined with the jewels of the heads of kings, brought under control by his power". If the system of chronology accepted for him (A.D. 585-93) appears reasonable, his reign saw the rise of a new power in the west. The political condition of Northern India assumed a new phase about this time. The fall of the imperial Guptas and the failure of Yaśodharman to build a permanent empire, led to the disintegration of

148. *I.H.Q.*, XXI, pp. 19f.
149. *H.C.*, (Cowell), pp. 217-18.

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northern India, marked by the rise of a number of powers. Most important of these were the Puṣyabhūtis of Sthāneśvara, the Maukharis of Kośala and the Later Guptas of Mālwa and Magadha. We have already referred to the struggle for supremacy over Magadha and Gauḍa between Īśāṇa and his successors and the Later Guptas. Īśāṇa, the powerful king of the Maukharis, claims in the Harāhā epigraph[150] to have conquered a part of Magadha and defeated the Gauḍas. The Deo-Baranark inscription of Jīvitagupta II[151] proves that Īśāṇa's successors, Śarvavarman and Avantivarman, held sway over some part of Magadha. While both Kumāragupta III, who defeated Īśāṇa, and his son Dāmodaragupta defeated the Maukharis,[152] the latter (Dāmodara) fell fighting with the successors of Īśāṇa.[153] So in the struggle for supremacy between the Maukharis and the Later Guptas, fortunes wavered between them,[154] but with the rise of Mahāsenagupta, both Magadha and Gauḍa seem to have come under the sway of the Later Guptas.

It appears likely that the growth of Kāmarūpa power in Bengal and a new campaign of conquest, started by Susthita turned the attention of Mahāsenagupta towards the east, where Kāmarūpa rulers had taken possession of the whole of the *Puṇḍravardhana bhukti*. Ever since the time of Bhūtivarman, the political influence of Kāmarūpa in Eastern India effectively blocked the further extension of the power of either the Maukharis or the Later Guptas in North Bengal. The materials at our disposal do not prove that these powers held North Bengal. The Nidhanpur grant of Bhāskara of the early part of the 7th century A.D. proves that this king only confirmed the donation of lands in *Puṇḍravardhana* because of the loss of copper plates. We have discussed this question in another connection. The activities of the Maukharis and the Later Guptas were probably confined to Western and Southern Bengal owing to the hold of Kāmarūpa in *Puṇḍravardhana*. It was perhaps Dāmodaragupta, who made an unsuccessful attempt at

150. *E.I.*, XIV, pp. 110f.

151. *C.I.I.*, III, pp. 216f.

152. *C.I.I.*, III, pp. 203f (Aphsad Ins. of Ādityasena).

153. *P.H.A.I.*, p. 606 (f.n.).

154. Opinion is divided whether the Later Guptas held sway over Magadha. H.C. Raychaudhuri holds that the successors of Īśāṇa, as proved by the Deo-Baranark inscription of Jīvita, held parts of Magadha; the Guptas held sway over Mālwa only till the time of Mahāsenagupta. (*P.H.A.I.*, pp. 606f). R.K. Mookerji (*Harṣa*, pp. 60- 67); C.V. Vaidya (*H.M.H.I.*, I, p. 35) and D.C. Ganguly (*J.B.O.R.S.*, XIX, p. 412) locate them in Mālwa. R.D. Banerji holds a different view (*J.B.O.R.S.*, XIV, pp. 254f), challenged by Mookerji (*J.B.O.R.S.*, XV, pp. 251f) and Raychaudhuri (*J.B.O.R.S.*, XV, pp. 651f).

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expelling the Varmans of Kāmarūpa from North Bengal during the time of Sthitavarman; but the latter signalised his victory by the performance of two horse sacrifices. Susthita probably, like his father, attempted fresh conquests on the frontiers of Bengal and Bihar; but the rise of Mahāsena provided a new opportunity for the Guptas to put an end to further Kāmarūpa influence in the West and in North Bengal.

The invasion of Mahāsenagupta is testified by the Aphsad epigraph of Ādityasena. It records that his "mighty fame marked with the honour of victory over the illustrious Susthitavarman (and white) as a full-bloom jasmine or water lily, or as a pure necklace of pearls pounded into little bits, is constantly sung on the bank of (the river) *Lauhitya*, the surfaces of which are (so) cool by the *siddhas* in pairs, when they wake up after sleeping in the shade of the areca palm that are in full bloom".[155] In spite of this definite reference to Susthita and the Brahmaputra, some writers identify him with a Maukhari ruler. This is the view of Fleet,[156] R.K. Mookerji,[157] Hoernle,[158] S.K. Aiyangar[159] and others; but R.D. Banerji,[160] P. Bhattacharya,[161] B.C. Law,[162] and others have rightly identified him with the king of Kāmarūpa. "The association of Susthitavarman with the river *Lauhitya* clearly shows that the king of that name mentioned in the Nidhanpur plates is meant".[163] Basak finds in verse 19 of the Nidhanpur grant a hint at the defeat of Susthitavarman.[164] But the actual interpretation of the verse which states 'by him was given away to supplicants as if it were (a clod of) earth, that shining *Lakṣmī*,' does not justify his contention. It perhaps points to the king's benevolent nature. He might have bestowed large gifts on those who approached him for the purpose and have had little attachment to wealth.

The date of the defeat of Susthita or the invasion of Kāmarūpa is difficult to determine. N.N. Vasu[165] ascribes it to A.D. 575, which appears to be impossible. The Maukhari menace itself was not over until A.D.

155. *C.I.I.*, III, pp. 200-208 (lines 10-11).
156. *C.I.I.*, III, (Intro), p. 15.
157. *Harṣa*, p. 25.
158. *J.A.S.B.*, LXIII, I, p. 102.
159. *J.I.H.*, V, p. 319.
160. *J.B.O.R.S.*, XV, pp. 252f.
161. *K.S.*, (Intro), p. 15.
162. *J.U.P.H.S.*, XVIII, pp. 43f.
163. Raychaudhuri, *P.H.A.I.*, p. 607 (f.n. I).
164. *H.N.E.I.*, p. 216.
165. *Social History of Kāmarūpa*, 1, 144.

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570-80, as proved by their coins,[166] and Mahāsena must have taken time to defeat them before he could advance up to the Brahmaputra. The invasion of the conqueror, therefore, cannot be placed earlier than A.D. 590-93, as he could only have re-established his supremacy over Magadha and Gauḍa towards the close of the 6th century A.D.[167] Mahāsena's expedition must have taken place before the invasion of the Chālukya king Kīrtivarman, who claims to have conquered among other countries, *Aṅga*, *Vaṅga*, *Kaliṅga* and *Magadha*; Kīrtivarman's last date is A.D. 597-98.[168] Taking all these contemporary events into consideration, the date of the invasion of Mahāsena can be placed between A.D. 590-93.

It does not appear likely that Mahāsena actually advanced far into Kāmarūpa or crossed the Brahmaputra, since he possibly embarked on a later campaign against the kingdom. The scene of the battle was the bank of the Brahmaputra, and Kāmarūpa was certainly affected by the loss of her possessions in North Bengal. It was, however, a temporary loss; because within two decades or so *Puṇḍravardhana* was re-occupied by Bhāskara. The western boundary of Kāmarūpa still remained the Teestā or the Karatoyā. It is rightly pointed out that this victory of the Gupta king had a political consequence, for he recovered the whole of the *Puṇḍravardhana* and the Kāmarūpa boundary was pushed to the Teesā-*Karatoyā*. The result was probably that Kāmarūpa lost all the territories which included the land donated by Mahābhūtavarman.[169] Kāmarūpa still held sway over portions of South-east and North Bengal, and Susthitavarman's political influence remained effective among his defeated feudatories.[170]

In the verse 48 of the Doobi grant there is a significant mention of the steady advance of the Gauḍa army towards the frontier of Kāmarūpa. From this we may infer that after the conquest of *Puṇḍravardhana* lying to the west of the *Karatoyā*, Mahāsena pursued Susthita to his frontier and that the latter was worsted or died in the course of his defeat. It may be that the resistance of Supratiṣṭhita and Bhāskara to Mahāsena, mentioned in the said verse, took place immediately after this; but the latter reference more probably applies to a second invasion of Mahāsena,

166. The dates of Śarvavarman & Avantivarman are taken to be A. D. 553-54 and 569-70; but Dikshit reads them as 577-88 and 579-80: (See *J.R.A.S.*, 1906, p. 848; R.S. Tripathi, *History of Kanauj*, pp. 55-60).
167. Majumdar, *History of Bengal*, I, p. 58.
168. *I.A.*, XIX, p. 7 (Mahākūṭa Ins.).
169. *E.H.K.*, p. 52-53.
170. Doobi grant, *V* 41.

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in his first attempt could not achieve anything in the way of the conquest of Kāmarūpa to the east of *Karatoyā*. The probability of a second invasion is strengthened by the fact that in the Aphsad inscription, referring to Mahāsena's invasion, there is no mention of the two sons of Susthita; in any case, it is probable that Susthita fell fighting in the contest, but the frontiers of Kāmarūpa could not be pushed back from the *Karatoyā* and, therefore, the campaign was followed by a second invasion of Kāmarūpa.

12. Supratiṣṭhitavarman :

It was with a heavy heart at the death of his father that Supratiṣṭhita ascended the throne in about A.D. 593, to make room, as we shall show, after a very short reign, for his more capable brother Bhāskara. He was born of Śyāmādevī, "the moon, as it were, to dispel (all) gloom—whose prosperity was for the benefit of others, who was possessed of elephants and attended by the chief among the learned, and possessed of a well established capital like a *Kulācala*, whose height is for the benefit of others, which is haunted by the chief of *Vidyādharas* and is rich in elephants".[171] As stated in the Doobi grant (vv. 44-47) both the sons of Susthita "were endowed with royal qualities manifested on this earth through their merits; one was esteemed as the extirpator of the enemies, with awful countenance in battle, but lovely like the moon, in relation to his well-wishers.—The elder (Supratiṣṭhita) one was of great fame with powerful hands, that looked like the trunk of a mighty elephant".

Some writers do not give Supratiṣṭhita the credit of accession to the throne. Basak, referring to the verse 21 of the Nidhanpur grant, which states that 'his prosperity was for the benefit of others, holds that the phrase refers to Mahāsenagupta and that Supratiṣṭhita became his vassal. "If he ever reigned as a king", Basak writes, "he might have conducted the administration of Kāmarūpa on behalf of the king of Magadha, who occupied that kingdom after defeating his father".[172] But the said verse rather suggests that he reigned as an independent ruler with his mighty army, and that all that he did for the prosperity of the kingdom passed to his brother, Bhāskara. The kingdom was never occupied by Mahāsena, and hence the question of the vassalage of Supratiṣṭhita did not arise at all. P. Bhattacharya is right in holding that the allusion in the grant was to Bhāskara, who might have enjoyed the results of Supratiṣṭhita's activities; he rightly contends that Supratiṣṭhita reigned for a few years.[173]

171. Nidhanpur grant, *VV* 20-21.
172. *H.N.E.I.*, p. 217.
173. *K.S.*, p. 31 (f.n. 3).

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The contention of K.L. Barua, therefore, that he died as a *Yuvarāja*,[174] is untenable.

Besides the *Harṣacarita*,[175] and the *Clay Seal* of Bhāskara (L. 8) there is a definite mention of Supratiṣṭhita as a ruler in the Doobi grant (v. 52) which states thus: "Then the elder (of the two) who was worshipped in the minds of the people, having, as ordained by fate, gone to the other world—Bhāskara ascended the throne". It is evident that Bhāskara became king, probably after the premature death of his elder brother and after a rule of a few years by the latter.[176]

It appears likely that immediately after the death of his father, and before Supratiṣṭhita and his younger brother could make preparations for the recovery of the lost possessions in North Bengal, they were caught unawares by the second invasion of Mahāsenagupta. This is shown in the Doobi grant. "Their father having left for paradise, and the Gauḍa army having gradually arrived (at the frontiers) the two brothers, though in their youth only, arrived at the scene with a handful of soldiers on account of the disturbance of peace, without any care or anxiety, just like *Bala* and *Achyuta*". The fighting between the Kāmarūpa and Gauḍa army is described in the same grant. "Having arrived there (the two princes)—pierced through the huge troops of mighty elephants that looked like the range of the *Krauñca* mountain, belonging to the Gauḍa army, with sharp arrows—having destroyed the army of the enemy in a short span of time with sharp arrows and various types of other deadly weapons—they became shrouded in the (darkness) of night and confronted with an array of wild elephants—They (the princes) were brought near their own country through sheer luck by the said armies—and having arrived again at their own place, delighted (the people) of their vast paternal kingdom".[177] The sense of the verses will show that the Gauḍa army arrived at the frontiers of Kāmarūpa, i.e. near the *Karatoyā* and when Supratiṣṭhita and Bhāskara arrived at the scene, a tough battle ensued with varying fortunes on either side, till at last the frontier was crossed and the two princes were pursued by the enemy; but they returned safe to their kingdom.

In the opinion of D.C. Sircar, the battle took place in the heart of Kāmarūpa and he further holds that it was a naval fight, fought not far from Tezpur, with the result that the princes were taken prisoners and

174. *E.H.K.*, p. 57; also R.G. Basak, *H.N.E.I.*, pp. 217-18.
175. *H.C.* (Cowell), pp. 212f.
176. See P. D. Chaudhury, *J.A.R.S.*, XI, pp. 33-38; B. P. Sinha, *J.B.O.R.S.*, XXXV p. 130; D.C. Sircar, *I.H.Q.*, XXVI, pp. 241f.
177. Doobi grant, *VV* 48-51.

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were re-instated in their kingdom as subordinate allies of Gauḍa. The king of *Gauḍa* leading the army was, according to Sircar, either Śaśāṅka or his immediate successor.[178] But, as we have stated, the battle was fought just outside the boundary line, created as a result of the defeat of Susthita in the hands of Mahāsena. It was after a hard fight that the frontier was crossed and the princes were pursued to their kingdom. The advance of the Gauḍa army as far as Tezpur is nowhere indicated in the grant. It is unlikely that the princes were taken prisoner and later on re-instated by Śāśaṅka or his successor. The invasion cannot be placed earlier than A.D. 593-94 when Śaśāṅka's rise to power in Gauḍa is questionable. B.P. Sinha also takes the Gauḍa invader to be either Jayanāga[179] or Śaśāṅka, more probably the latter. "The invasion, though it failed in its immediate objective", he writes, "must have created a sense of danger in the minds of the rulers of Kāmarūpa".[180] This he writes in order to explain the cause of Bhāskara's alliance with Harṣa. But, as we have explained, the rise of either Jayanāga or Śaśāṅka in about A.D. 593-94 is very doubtful, and it seems probable that the invasion was a second attempt of Mahāsenagupta[181] against Kāmarūpa, in order to achieve what was left unfinished by his first invasion. The true reading of the grant leaves no room for doubt that both the invasions were very close in point of time. It is wrong, therefore, to assume that either Bhāskara or his brother was a vassal of Śaśāṅka or his successor, and it is equally wrong to suggest that the imperial invader in about A.D. 593-94 was other than Mahāsenagupta, who, by his earlier campaigns, had already established himself in Magadha and parts of Gauḍa. It is possible that by the second invasion the boundary of Kāmarūpa was further pushed eastward from the *Karatoyā*.

Immediately after the war, Supratiṣṭhita died, perhaps from a wound, received while fighting; but in spite of his failure to recover the lost possessions of Kāmarūpa in Bengal, he built a prosperous capital, and increased the military strength of the kingdom, to be successfully utilised by his more able successor, to complete what he had begun and left unfulfilled.

13. Bhāskaravarman—the illustrious monarch of Eastern India :

With the accession of Bhāskaravarman, Kāmarūpa entered into a new chapter of her history, illumined by his Doobi and Nidhanpur grants,

178. *I.H.Q.*, XXVI, pp. 241-46.

179. The rise of Jayanāga is placed by some writers after Śaśāṅka. (Majumdar, *History of Bengal*, I, pp. 79-80).

180. *J.B.O.R.S.*, XXXV, pp. 130-37

181. P. D. Chaudhury, *J.A.R.S.*, XII, pp. 1f.

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the *Nālandā Clay Seals*, Bāṇa's *Harṣacarita*, the Chinese Records and other sources. We are on firmer grounds regarding the chronology of the period, thanks to his contemporaneity with Harṣa. The very short reign of his elder brother, Supratiṣṭhita, has been proved by Bhāskara's epigraphs, and it appears that the latter became king early in his life in about A.D. 594. This date is confirmed by an early Assamese chronicle, '*Kāmarūpar-Purāvṛtta*'. Unfortunately the original manuscript is not available. It states that in the year 612 Bakhtiyar advanced as far as *Kāmapīṭha*.[182] The date of his invasion, as recorded in the Kāṇāi Varaśī inscription, N. Gauhāti,[183] and confirmed by the *Tabaqāt-i-Nāsirī*,[184] is S.E. 1127=A.D. 1205-6, in which case, the Kāmarūpa era might have been started in (1206-612)=A.D. 594. It is only to a well-known ruler like Bhāskara that the commencement of an era may be ascribed. The system of chronology, worked out for the Varman line, on the basis of both epigraphy and synchronism with the Guptas, will fit in with the starting of an era by that ruler exactly at that time. It is, therefore, probable that just after his accession Bhāskara celebrated his coronation by starting a new era in A.D. 594. It is, however, strange that this local era was discarded in favour of either Gupta or Śaka era in the epigraphs, but survived in some circles for over 600 years. [183a] .

Bhāskara's accession was probably a little earlier than that of Harṣa (A.D. 606). This may be gathered from his position as an aged king dressed as Brahma, while Harṣa himself took the place of *Śakra* (*Indra*), in the religious ceremonies, described by Yuan Chwang.[185] He ruled for at least a few years after Harṣa's death (647-48), as he is associated with the Chinese Mission of Wang heuen tse that became involved in the usurpation of Arjuna after Harṣa's death.[186] In view of the above, the long reign of Bhāskara may be placed between A.D. 594-650. This long period is not unusual for an illustrious monarch like him who ascended the throne in his early age.

182. See K.L. Barua, *J.A.R.S.*, April, 1934; *Kāmarūpar Buruñjī*, p. 99.

183. *K.S.*, (Intro), p. 44.

183a. It may be noted that a few old manuscripts at the D.H.A.S. contain *nṛpaśaka* as against *devaśaka*, and in point of chronology the former is found to have been started from A.D. 594, the date of Bhāskara's accession. The *B. S.* or the *Bāngālāra sana* is but the *Bhāskarābda* which was also current in *Karṇasuvarṇa* in Bengal after its occupation by the king : (P.C. Choudhury, *A Cat . of Sanskrit Manuscripts at the D.H.A.S.*, Preface, VII.)

184. Raverty, I, pp. 560f; A. Salam, *Riyāz-us-Salātin*, pp. 65-68.

185. *Life*, pp. 177f; *Si yu ki*, I, pp. 215f.

186. *J.A.S.B.*, VI, p. 69; *I.A.*, IX, p. 14.

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The name '*Kumāra*', as mentioned in the Chinese sources, has probably a reference to his accession early in his career. It has, however, been interpreted differently. P. Bhattacharya is of the opinion that he retained this title as he remained a bachelor;[187] but in another place he contradicts himself, when he holds that it is highly improbable that he could remain unmarried, and suggests that perhaps he retained the title out of respect for his brother, who prabably did not ascend the throne, or if he did, occupied it only for a short time.[188] Kielhorn contends that his actual name was *Kumāra*, and Bhāskara was only his surname.[189] K.L. Barua explains the title by holding that Bhāskara was probably a celibate.[190] The name '*Kumāra*' is also mentioned in the *Harṣacarita* in the expression: *atra devena abhiṣiktaḥ Kumāraḥ;*[191] but this does not refer to Bhāskara, who is called by Bāṇa "*Bhāskaradyuti*" and *Prāgjyotiṣeśvara*'.[192] N.R. Roy wrongly takes it to refer to Bhāskara, on the basis of which he makes him the vassal of Harṣa.[193] C.V. Vaidya believes that Bhāskara was anointed by Harṣa.[194] The same view is held by R. K. Mookerji.[195] But, as R.C. Majumdar rightly points out, the evidence from Bāṇa and Yuan Chwang "does not leave any doubt as to the independent position of Kāmarūpa".[196] It is wrong to identify the *Kumāra Rājā*, an already crowned king of Eastern India according to the Chinese Records, with 'Kumāra' of the *Harṣacarita* in order to find justification for the theory of the extension of Harṣa's empire to Kāmarūpa or to make it a vassal State. In the opinion of Tripathi, the word '*Kumāra*' refers to Mādhavagupta, and Bhāskara at no time accepted Harṣa's authority, as Bāṇa rightly calls him '*Prāgjyotiṣeśvara*'.[197] D.C. Sircar, identifying the *Kumāra* with Kumāragupta, son of Mādhavagupta, rightly remarks that "*Kumāra* of the *Harṣacarita* cannot be identified with Bhāskaravarman of Kāmarūpa, as the latter was already a crowned king when he came into contact with Harṣa".[198] It is only reasonable to hold that the name or rather the title '*Kumāra*', applied to Bhāskara by Yuan Chwang, has nothing to do with his name or even surname. It was perhaps a sort of nickname, which he

187. *K.S.* (Intro), pp. 16-17.
188. *E.I.*, XII, p. 70.
189. *J.R.A.S.*, 1898, pp. 384-85.
190. *J.A.R.S.*, I, pp. 97f; *E.H.K.*, p. 57-58.
191. *H.C.* (Cowell), p. 76; Tripathi, *History of Kanauj*, pp. 104-5.
192. *H.C.* (Cowell), pp. 217-18.
193. *I.H.Q.*, III, pp. 769-93.
194. *H.M.H.I.*, I, pp. 11, 30, 41.
195. *Harṣa*, pp. 44, 48.
196. *I.H.Q.*, V, pp. 229-36.
197. *J.B.O.R.S.*, XVIII, pp. 317-18; *History of Kanauj*, pp. 104-5.
198. *I.H.Q.*, XIX, pp. 278-81.

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retained even in his old age. It was a prefix added to *rājā*, and may have been retained by him neither owing to his respect for his brother, who by his accession was long dead, nor because of his celibacy, but perhaps owing to his early accession to the throne. *Kumārarājā* Bhāskara of the Chinese Records, therefore, was quite a different person from the *Kumāra* of the *Harṣacarita*. As we shall show, the relation between Harṣa and Bhāskara was not that of an overlord and a vassal.

The early career of Bhāskara is noticed in connection with his association with his brother in the Gauḍa war, in which he participated.[199] The loss of the possessions of Kāmarūpa in Bengal since Susthitavarman's time and the second invasion of Mahāsena in about A.D. 593-94, were fresh in his memory. It was, therefore, one of his pressing duties to recover them at the earliest opportunity. The early part of his reign, even before the accession of Harṣa, was employed in preparations towards that end, and this explains his association with Harṣa, who was confronted with a similar difficult situation.

That Bhāskara by his kingly qualities, devotion to duties, and love of his people, contributed to the proper organisation of the State and the enhancement of the glory of the kingdom, both by peaceful means and wars, is revealed from his grants. He was "like the sun—and the abode of all light—who was without cruelty, easily accessible, of immense effects, and the soles of whose feet were surrounded by people who resorted to his protection".[200] He was created "for the proper organisation of the duties of various classes and stages of life—who had revealed the light of the *Āryya dharma* by dispelling the accumulated darkness of this *Kali* age by making a judicious application of his revenue". He was equal in strength to "the whole ring of his feudatories; he who had devised many a way of enjoyment for his hereditary subjects, whose royal devotion to him was augmented by his steadiness of purpose, modesty and affability; he who was adorned with a wonderful ornament of splendid fame, made of the flowery words of praise, variously composed by hundreds of kings, vanquished by him in battle; he, whose virtuous activities, like those of *Śivi*, were applied in making gifts for the benefit of others; he whose powers, as of a second preceptor of the gods (*Bṛhaspati*), were recognised by others, on account of his skill in dividing and applying the means of politics as appropriate to the occasion; he whose own conduct was adorned by learning, valour, patience,

199. *J.A.R.S.*, XII, pp. 19f.
200. Nidhanpur Grant, *VV* 22-25.

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honour and good qualities". He was devoid of faults, and always took the side of virtue, for which the *Lakṣmī* of Kāmarūpa became attached to his person.[201] Moreover, "his intellect was matured by listening to the essence of the meaning of the various *śāstras*", and he "acquired through eloquence and poetic genius mastery of all styles, possessing sweet wordings with clear and superb ornamentation. Virtue dislodged, was re-established by destroying evils. Glory was restored from the clutches of the wicked, just like a deer from a trap. Fortune, who fell victim to the intoxicating influence of the enemy, was augmented after due rectification and owned by him, who was of resplendent power and a follower of the doctrine of *Maheśvara*".[202]

Bhāskara's success rested not only in his organisation of the State but also in his political relations, both of war and diplomacy, with the leading powers of his time. The political condition of Northern India towards the end of the 6th and the beginning of the 7th century A. D. assumed a new phase with the rise of the Maukharis, the Vardhanas and Devagupta in the west and Śaśāṅka in Gauḍa. There had been no love lost between the Later Guptas and the Varmans of Kāmarūpa for more than a decade, and the rising power of Śaśāṅka was also a matter of grave concern for Bhāskara in his task of extending the limits of his kingdom. The family of Puṣyabhūti was at first in close alliance with the family of Mahāsenagupta, evidently out of fear of the Maukharis. As proved by Bāṇa, Prabhākara appointed two sons of Mahāsena, Mādhavagupta and Kumāragupta, to wait upon Harṣa and Rājyaśrī.[203] From this it would appear that Prabhākara was the overlord of the Guptas. This alliance is also proved by the Madhuban and the Sonpat grants of Harṣa, which represent Mahāsenaguptā Devī as the mother of Prabhākara;[204] the Apshsad grant further alludes to the association of Mādhava with Harṣa.[205] With the marriage of Rājyaśrī however, the two houses of the Vardhanas and the Maukharis were drawn closer. The alliance between the Guptas (Devagupta) and Śaśāṅka, as shown by H.C. Raychaudhuri, was due to the alliance of the Vardhanas with the Maukharis.[206] This Devagupta (of Mālwa) is taken as the eldest son of Mahāsena, and placed between the latter and Mādhava.[207] He is

201. *Ibid*, lines, 34-35.
202. Doobi grant, *VV* 54-55.
203. *H.C.* (Cowell); *P.H.A.I.*, pp. 606f.
204. *E.I.*, I, pp. 72; VII, 157f; *C.I.I.*, III, 231-32.
205. *C.I.I.*, III, 200f.
206. *P.H.A.I.*, pp. 606f.
207. *Ibid.*, p. 608.

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mentioned in the Madhuban and the Banskhera grants of Harṣa.[208] Raychaudhuri points out that, as the Guptas are associated with Mālwa in the *Harṣacarita*, there can be no doubt that this Devagupta (II) was identical with the lord of Mālwa who murdered Grahavarman of Kanauj, though his name is not found in the Aphsad epigraph.[209] This alliance of Devagupta with Śaśāṅka and the murder of Grahavarman, Harṣa's brother in-law, by the former, as well as the murder of Rājyavardhana, by the Gauḍa ruler,[210] had an important bearing on the relations between Bhāskara and Harṣa.

Śaśāṅka, immediately after the assassination of Rājyavardhana, occupied Kanauj, and released Rājyaśrī, the widowed queen of Grahavarman, from detention in her capital. With the murder of Rājya, Harṣa had no alternative but to ascend the throne at Sthāneśvara, and his duties were to drive away Śaśāṅka from Kanauj, to avenge his brother's murder, and to rescue his sister. To achieve these ends, Harṣa firmly resolved to advance with his army to bring the 'Five Indias under allegiance',[211] and punish his enemies as they deserved. The removal of Śaśāṅka was also of immediate concern for Bhāskara for the recovery of the lost possessions in Bengal. The intricate position in which Harṣa was placed, seemed to augur well for the Kāmarūpa king.

The details of the alliance are given in the *Harṣacarita*. The account may be exaggerated, but the kernel of the description appears to bear a historical truth. The alliance was concluded through Bhāskara's ambassador, Haṁsavega, who went to Harṣa's court. The first question that was put to him by Harṣa is stated by Bāṇa thus: "Haṁsavega, is the noble prince well?" "At this moment", was the reply, "he is well."[212] The manner by which the ambassador impressed upon Harṣa the necessity of making an alliance is remarkable indeed. Haṁsavega stated: "From childhood, it was this prince's firm resolution never to do homage to any being except the lotus feet of *Śiva*. Such an ambition, so difficult of attainment—may be reached by one of three means, by a conquest of the whole earth, by death or by a friend like Your Majesty.—The Sovereign of Assam desires with Your Majesty an imperishable alliance.—Commission me to say that the Sovereign of Assam may enjoy Your Majesty's hearty embrace, so that the crushed bits of bracelet-gems may grind as

208. Bühler, *E.I.*, IV, 210f; I, 72f; Kielhorn, VII, 157f.
209. *P.H.A.I.*, pp. 607f; Hoernle, *J.R.A.S.*, 1903, p. 562.
210. *H.C.* (Cowell), p. 178.
211. Watters, *Yuan Chwang*, I, p. 343; also, Beal, I, p. 213.
212. *H.C.* (Cowell), p. 211.

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they clash against the jewelled edges of great arm-rings.—If Your Majesty accepts not his love, command me what to report to my master". The reply of Harṣa was equally appropriate: "How could the mind of one like me possibly even in a dream show aversion, Haṁsavega, when such a great and noble spirit, such a treasure of virtue and captain of the worthy, bestows his love as an absent friend upon me.—Therefore, use your endeavours that my yearning to see the prince may not torment me long".[213]

While all writers admit the importance of this alliance in the career of both the kings, there is much disagreement as to its interpretation. N. R. Roy[214] contends that Bhāskara's seeking of an alliance with Harṣa out of fear of Śaśāṅka, along with his long association with the ruler of Kanauj only proves the subordinate position of Kāmarūpa, to which Harṣa's sway extended. But this has rightly been disputed by R. C. Majumdar.[215] R. D. Banerji, commenting on the alliance, holds that it was the defeat of Susthitavarman at the hands of Mahāsena that led Bhāskara to seek an alliance, and that he "may have felt the weight of Śaśāṅka's arms before he sent an ambassador to Harṣa to seek his alliance".[216] R. S. Tripathi thinks that it was his fear of Śaśaṅka that led him to offer his hand to Harṣa in the beginning of his campaign.[217] B. P. Sinha is of the opinion that it was Śaśāṅka's earlier success over Kāmarūpa and Harṣa's preparations for war that served as the back-ground of Bhāskara's alliance with Harṣa.[218] R. K. Mookerji finds in the offer of alliance Bhāskara's allegiance to Harṣa. But Tripathi, rightly disputing this, remarks thus: "Can the conclusion of a treaty by any stretch of imagination be interpreted as offering allegiance of his own accord ?"[219] Basak seems to interpret it "as a hint that the Kāmarūpa king was anxious to offer his personal services and remain under obligations to the emperor of Northern India."[220] But, he seems to contradict himself by holding that the alliance was due to a "reciprocal longing" and that Harṣa, hearing of Bhāskara's accomplishments, was anxious to become his

213. *Ibid*, pp. 217-18.

214. *I.H.Q.*, III, pp. 769f.

215. *I.H.Q.*, V, pp. 229-236. The writer, however, gives inferior position to Bhāskara : (*Classical Age*, pp. 139f).

216. *History of Orissa*, I, pp. 128f.

217. *J.B.O.R.S.*, XVIII, pp. 317-18.

218. *J.B.O.R.S.*, XXXV, pp. 130-137.

219. *History of Kanauj*, p. 104.

220. *H.N.E.I.*, p. 223.

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friend. He desired an interview earlier, and Harṣa even wanted Bhāskara to assist him in his campaign against Śaśāṅka and other conquests.[221]

From a study of the relevant passages from Bāṇa, already quoted, it appears that Bhāskara was known to Harṣa from sometime past before the interview of Haṁsavega, and the Kanauj king may have desired an earlier interview with Bhāskara. The political condition in Eastern India along with the traditional rivalry between Kāmarūpa and Gauḍa on the one hand and the Guptas on the other was long known to the Vardhanas. Harṣa, therefore, expected such a proposal of alliance from Kāmrūpa, which became more probable after the murder of Rājyavardhana by Śaśāṅka. Harṣa had a longing to meet Bhāskara, and hence, Haṁsavega was asked to send his master as soon as possible, so that they might plan a campaign against their common enemy. Moreover, Harṣa's immediate duty was to rescue Rājyaśrī, and by the alliance, Harṣa hoped to encourge Bhāskara to carry on the campaign against Śaśāṅka. The necessity to recover the lost possessions of Kāmarūpa in Bengal, which could be possible only by holding the rising power of the Gauḍa ruler in check, was the real motive of the alliance on the part of Bhāskara; it was, therefore, as important for him as it was for Harṣa. The alliance was cemented after negotiations on both sides and on equal terms; its significance is realised by H. C. Raychaudhuri, who remarks that Harṣa concluded an alliance with Bhāskara in order to meet the league of the Guptas and the Gauḍas.[222] In other words, without Bhāskara's aid it is doubtful whether Harṣa could have suppressed or vanquished Śaśāṅka.[223]

It is unfortunate that the progress of the campaign is nowhere recorded. The *Harṣacarita* ends at a point when Harṣa returns to his camp after the recovery of his sister. Yuan Chwang states that proceeding eastward, Harṣa waged incessant warfare until in six years he fought the 'five Indias' or brought the 'five Indias' under allegiance.[224] Again his biographer writes: "He (Harṣa) was soon able to avenge the injuries received by his brother and to make himself master of India".[225] It is further stated: "At the present time Silāditya Mahārāja had conquered the nations from east to west and carried his arms to remote districts".[226] The Chinese Records, therefore, are extremely vague about

221. *Ibid*, pp. 223-24.
222. *P.H.A.I.*, p. 609.
223. N.N Vasu, *Social History of Kāmarūpa*, I, p. 148.
224. Watters, I, p. 343; Beal, I, p. 213.
225. *Life*, p. 83.
226. Watters, II, p. 239; Beal, I, pp. 256-57.

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the military activities of Harṣa. Bāṇa incidentally alludes to riders, "intently occupied in rehearsing the approaching Gauḍa war".[227] An indirect reference is also detected in a passage in which the "sunset is described in terms suggesting bloody wars", which led to "the rising of the moon of Harṣa's glory".[228] Here also the references are vague. Harṣa's wars were continued towards the end of his reign, as is proved by his Koṅgoda (Orissa) campaign in about A. D. 643. Even the existence of Śaśāṅka as late as A. D. 619, if not later, is proved by the Ganjam Plates; this seems to prove that Harṣa had not finished all his campaigns by A. D. 612, despite the testimony of the Chinese Records.

A passage in the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* is explained by some writers as referring to Harṣa's march to Puṇḍra in pursuit of Śaśāṅka and the latter's confinement within the limits of his own territory after his defeat. The reference here is vague. The passage runs thus: ' "His (Rājyavardhana's) younger brother Ha (Harṣa) will be an unrivalled hero. He decided against the famous Soma (Śaśāṅka). The powerful Vaiśya king with a large army marched against the eastern country, against the excellent capital called Puṇḍra of that characterless man,—He defeated Soma—and Soma was forbidden to move out of his camp (being ordered) to remain therein. He returned having (or not having) been honoured in that kingdom of the barbarian".[229] The treatise neither refers to Bhāskara nor to the occupation of Śaśāṅka's kingdom by this Kāmarūpa king or Harṣa.

While the details of Harṣa's occupation of Gauḍa after the expulsion of Śaśāṅka remain in obscurity, further light is thrown on the question by the Nidhanpur grant of Bhāskara, issued from his victorious military camp at *Karṇasuvarṇa* in Bengal.[230] This, as we have already shown, confirms a previous land-grant by Bhūtivarman in the *Chandrapurī viṣaya* in *Puṇḍravardhana*, and seems to prove that at the time of the issue of the grant both *Puṇḍravardhana* and *Karṇasuvarṇa* were held by Bhāskara. Many theories have been advanced to explain when and how these regions were occupied :—firstly, that Harṣa's empire extended to Kāmarūpa, and Bhāskara occupied *Karṇasuvarṇa* after the death of both Śaśāṅka and Harṣa; secondly, that after the expulsion of Śaśāṅka from Gauḍa after A. D. 619, *Karṇasuvarṇa* was handed over to

227. *H.C.* (Cowell), p. 209.
228. *Ibid*, p. 200 (note 4).
229. Ed. T.G. Śāstrī, VV 721-726; K.P. Jayaswal, *Imperial History of India*, p. 50.
230. See H. Beveridge, (*J.A.S.B.*, LXII, I, pp. 315f) for location of the place.

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Bhāskara by Harṣa; thirdly, that the Gauḍa ruler, overthrown either by Harṣa or Bhāskara or by both, was not Śaśāṅka, as he was alive up to A. D. 625, but one Jayanāga. We shall try to show that none of these theories is based on a reasonable interpretation of the available materials.

To begin with the last, B. C. Law holds that the king, overthrown by Bhāskara, may have been Jayanāga,[231] and that Bhāskara, being defeated by Śaśāṅka, asked help from Harṣa, and, therefore, could not disobey Harṣa's commands.[232] D. C. Ganguly holds that Bhāskara wrested *Karṇasuvarṇa* from Jayanāga and was forced to surrender it to Śaśāṅka, who conquered Gauḍa from Jayanāga. He further contends that Śaśāṅka's victory made Bhāskara realise that Kāmarūpa was in danger; but when Śaśāṅka invaded Kāmarūpa is not known nor does Ganguly fix the date of the occupation of *Karṇasuvarṇa* by Bhāskara.[233] The existing materials do not justify the conclusion that Bhāskara fought either with Śaśāṅka or Jayanāga before Haṁsavega met Harṣa. It is equally improbable that Harṣa and Bhāskara, or Bhāskara alone, fought against a little known ruler like Jayanāga.[234] It is likely that Jayanāga was defeated by Śaśāṅka himself, who would not have started his campaign against the Vardhana-Maukhari houses until after the occupation of *Gauḍa* and *Karṇasuvarṇa*.

R. S. Tripathi believes that *Karṇasuvarṇa* was occupied by Bhāskara after Arjuna's usurpation of Kanauj, when Bhāskara helped the Wang heuen-tse Mission; because Harṣa, he asserts, would not have allowed Bhāskara to take possession of such a fertile land and thereby increase his power.[235] R. C. Majumdar contends that Bhāskara occupied *Karṇasuvarṇa* after Harṣa's death,[236] and adds that when Bhāskara aided the Chinese Mission and Arjuna was defeated, he made himself master of Eastern India and pitched his victorious camp in Śaśāṅka's capital. Bhāskara thereby is said to have fulfilled his grudge against Harṣa, who treated him as a vassal.[237] This is an extreme view. We have no evidence of the existence of ill-will between the two rulers until the end of their career.[238] The question of Bhāskara's taking revenge against

231. *E.I.*, XVIII, pp. 60f.
232. *J.U.P.H.S.*, XVIII, pp. 43f.
233. *I.H.Q.*, XII, pp. 456-68; also R. P. Chanda, *Gauḍarājamālā*, pp. 7f.
234. Majumdar holds that Jayanāga occupied *Karṇasuvarṇa after* Śaśāṅka's death and before its conquest by Bhāskara. (*History of Bengal*, I, pp. 79-80).
235. *J.B.O.R.S.*, XVIII, pp. 316-18; *History of Kanauj*, p. 103.
236. *History of Bengal*, I, p. 70.
237. *An Outline of Ancient Indian History & Civilisation*, p. 348.
238. See R. G. Basak, *H.N.E.I.*, pp. 227f.

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Harṣa is only based on imagination. There is no evidence to prove that Arjuna was the legal heir to the empire of Harṣa. He was perhaps a petty ruler of *Tīrabhukti* and, as rightly held by S. K. Aiyangar, Bhāskara would not have helped the Mission if the legitimate heir of Harṣa's empire was at war with it.[239] It is wrong to hold that it was as a result of the anarchy after Harṣa's death that *Karṇasuvarṇa* was occupied by Bhāskara. Harṣa's relations with Bhāskara appear to be those of an equal. We shall show that *Karṇasuvarṇa* was occupied long before the end of Harṣa's reign.

In the opinion of P. Bhattacharya, Bhāskara was in *Karṇasuvarṇa* with Harṣa for some time when the grant was issued, but the result of the conquest was enjoyed by Harṣa.[240] The district was occupied by Harṣa, Bhattacharya suggests, after Śaśāṅka's death in A. D. 625, or after his expulsion by Bhāskara and Harṣa, and the grant may have been issued after the occupation.[241] He concludes by holding that *Karṇasuvarṇa* came into the possession of Harṣa after Śaśāṅka's death, and Bhāskara either occupied it after Harṣa's death, or was rewarded with it because of his help to the Chinese Mission.[242] But rewarded by whom ? It is wrong to assume that a portion of land was given to Bhāskara by the Chinese Mission, as if whole India was conquered by it from the hands of Arjuna. It is unfair that Bhāskara should be accused of treachery for his aid against the usurper. What we know of his character, makes it unlikely that he helped the Mission out of grudge.[243] The Mission was but a peaceful one, sent by China "in order that the principles of humanity and justice which had been diffused in that country should have a protector and representative there".[244] It was only when the escort of Wang heuen-tse was killed by Arjuna that help was sent from Kāmarūpa, Nepal and Tibet.[245] Bhāskara's respect for Yuan Chwang, Arjuna's improper action, and the political confusion led him to help the Mission to avenge the massacre; [246] but his advanced age at the time would suggest that his help was not offered from political considerations.

239. *J.I.H.*, V, pp. 313f.
240. *K.S.*, p. 5.
241. *Ibid*, Intro, p. 16.
242. *E.I.*, XII, pp. 66f; *I.A.*, XLIII, pp. 95-96. D. C. Sircar also contends that Bhāskara occupied parts of Bengal & Bihar after Harṣa's death: (*I.H.Q.*, XIX, pp. 278-311).
243. See K.L. Barua, *J.A.R.S.*, V, pp. 118-121.
244. *J.A.S.B.*, VI, p. 69.
245. *I.A.*, IX, p. 14.
246. See R.G. Basak, *H.N.E.I.*, p. 234.

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As regards the occupation of Śaśāṅka's kingdom after A. D. 619 or after his death, Basak invents a theory of two campaigns on the part of Harṣa, in the second of which Bhāskara may have joined. In this the kingdom was wrested either from Śaśāṅka or his unknown successor, and Harṣa made it over to the Kāmarūpa king, who annexed it to his kingdom.[247] The date of occupation, in his opinion, is between A. D. 619-637.[248] But he contradicts himself in asserting that *Karṇasuvarṇa* did not form part of Kāmarūpa at any time and Bhāskara only pitched his camp there as an ally of Harṣa during the latter's second campaign. He concludes that both North and Central Bengal were added to Harṣa's empire.[249] We shall shortly prove that Basak's arguments are in no way justified. B. C. Sen contends that Śaśāṅka was not ousted and it was only after his death that his kingdom was annexed to Harṣa's empire. Bhāskara may have held a brief domination of Gauḍa after Harṣa's death.[250] N. N. Vasu holds that Harṣa probably allowed Bhāskara to rule over Gauḍa.[251] C. V. Vaidya thinks that Śaśāṅka's power in Bengal remained until A. D. 619, and after his death *Karṇasuvarṇa* was given to Bhāskara, as he accepted Harṣa's overlordship.[252] This does not find corroboration from any genuine source. P. L. Paul asserts that Bhāskara's position was inferior to that of Harṣa, and *Karṇasuvarṇa* may have been occupied after Śaśāṅka's death, but the occupation was not permanent.[253] B. P. Sinha believes that Śaśāṅka could not have died much earlier than A. D. 637 and that he held Magadha until 625 or his death. Harṣa, therefore, in his opinion, had a partial success over him at a later date, Bengal and Orissa being annexed to Harṣa's empire after Śaśāṅka's death.[254] We do not know on what evidence Sinha makes Śaśāṅka flourish in full glory until A. D. 637 or 625. V. Smith likewise contends that Śaśāṅka escaped with little loss, his kingdom being subject to Harṣa at a later date, and Bhāskara had to obey the orders of the Kanauj ruler.[256] What appears to be most unlikely, Smith makes Bhāskara a Mongolian or a Hinduised Koch, which has been rightly disputed by P. Bhattacharya.[257]

247. *Ibid*, p. 226.
248. *I.H.Q.*, VIII, p. 1-20.
249. *H.N.E.I.*, p. 229.
250. *Some Historical Aspects of the Inscriptions of Bengal*, etc., 1932, pp. 260-68.
251. *Social History of Kāmarūpa*, 1, pp. 148f.
252. *H.M.H.I.* I, pp. 11, 30, 41.
253. *I.H.Q.*, XII, pp. 63-83, (f.n. p. 74).
254. *J.B.O.R.S.*, XXXV, pp. 141f.
255. *E.H.I.*, pp. 312, 314, 329.
256. *Ibid*, p. 341.
257. *Pratibhā*, 1328 (B.S.) No. 8., pp. 285-7.

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The most important question to be decided is whether Harṣa's sway extended over the whole of India, including Kāśmīra, Nepal and Gauḍa and Kāmarūpa, as asserted by some writers. With this is intimately connected the expulsion of Śaśāṅka. K. M. Panikkar, for instance, giving the credit of the conquest of Gauḍa to Harṣa, asserts that his empire extended from Kāmarūpa to Kāśmīra, and from the Himalayas to the Vindhyas.[258] This has been rightly disputed by Majumdar, who limits Harṣa's empire to the modern U. P., Bihar and a portion of the Eastern Punjab with the exclusion of a portion of territory in the north-west; on the basis of the pilgrim's testimony, Majumdar is in favour of the view that Harṣa "was only a king of Kanauj".[259] This is also an extreme view. We cannot as well accept Mookerji's theory that Harṣa's campaigns were over by A. D. 612.[260] The Chinese sources, as we have already examined, are not clear on this point. It is yet to be proved that Kāśmīra and Nepal, not to speak of Kāmarūpa and even Gauḍa were included within Harṣa's empire. That his campaigns were not over by A. D. 612, as we have stated, is proved by his wars against Pulakesin II Chālukya and *Koṅgoda*. We do not know of his plans for the conquest of Gauḍa when he returned after the recovery of Rājyaśrī about A. D. 606. Possibly he returned to Kanauj, for his consecration, leaving Bhāskara to deal with Śaśāṅka. Bhāskara's occupation of both *Puṇḍravardhana* and *Karṇasuvarṇa* is undoubtedly proved by his Nidhanpur grant. As D. C. Ganguly rightly points out, "there is not the slightest evidence to prove that Harṣa ever held sway over Bengal", but "the larger portion of Gauḍa, which was situated between Kāmarūpa and *Karṇasuvarṇa* was within the kingdom of Bhāskaravarman". The occupation is proved by the fact that he with Yuan Chwang passed through Gauḍa with a vast army. Had this country been under any other king at the time, it is unlikely that Bhāskara would have been allowed to pass through it. So about A. D. 642, writes Ganguly, *Gauḍa*, including Northern *Rāḍhā*, formed part of Kāmarūpa.[261] But he does not believe that Śaśāṅka's kingdom was occupied long before the second meeting with Harṣa. The same view is held by N. N. Dasgupta, who states that it is doubtful whether *Karṇasuvarṇa* was held by Harṣa; "but in the second or the third quarter of the seventh century A. D. it was occupied for sometime at least by Harṣa's faithful ally Bhāskaravarman", and his "subjugation of *Karṇasuvarṇa* was not merely of the

258. *Śrī Harṣa*, p. 27.

259. *J.B.O.R.S.*, IX, pp. 311-25.

260. *Harṣa*, p. 36 (N.I.); C.V. Vaidya, *H.M.H.I.*, I, p. 13.

261. *I.H.Q.*, XV, pp. 122-24.

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nature of a raid on it".[262] But these writers are not definite about the date of Bhāskara's occupation. Their main difficulty is that they cannot reconcile the expulsion of Śaśāṅka at an early date with his existence in Orissa as late as A. D. 619. Whatever may have been the participation of Harṣa in this act of the expulsion of Śaśāṅka, the fact remains that this was definitely done before Harṣa's campaigns against Pulakesin II. He would not have gone to war with Pulakesin if he had a dangerous enemy on his flank. While R. D. Banerji's theory[263] of Śaśāṅka's overthrow through the combined efforts of Harṣa and Bhāskara seems inconclusive, since there is no reference to such a campaign in any source, he is right, when he holds, that the expulsion took place before the Ganjam plates, "and at the time he (Śaśāṅka) had lost his possessions in Bengal and was the master of Orissa only".[264] B. N. Sircar rightly contends that Harṣa's sway never reached Bengal, and Śaśāṅk's kingdom passed on to Bhāskara, as otherwise the latter could not have controlled the sea-route to China, as testified by the pilgrim's biographer.[265]

As stated by R. D. Banerji, it is evident that Gauḍa was lost before A. D. 619, and it is likely that *Karṇasuvarṇa* passed to Bhāskara before the coronation of Harṣa about A. D. 612,[266] and definitely at the time of the issue of the Nidhanpur grant.[267] Either Śaśāṅka was driven out by Bhāskara alone or he fled to Orissa out of fear of the huge preparations of Bhāskara, which is shown by the fact that the king, according to his Nidhanpur grant, stationed a vast army at the capital of Śaśāṅka, *Karṇasuvarṇa*. The latter inference is more likely , as no war with Gauḍa is referred to. The theory of the occupation of Śaśāṅka's kingdom by Bhāskara is further proved by the absence of any reference giving the credit to Harṣa. As Orissa was held by Śaśāṅka probably until his death some time after A. D. 619, the reference in the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* to his confinement in his kingdom, may indicate his taking shelter there. We are, therefore, constrained to believe that Śaśāṅka's kingdom had definitely passed to Bhāskara by A. D. 619, and perhaps even by A. D. 612. The occupation was but the recovery of the possessions of Kāmarūpa, lost through Mahāsena's invasion, and the victory was confirmed by the issue of the grant.

262. *I.C.*, II, pp. 37-45; also Chanda, *Pravāsī*, Vaiśākh, 1339 (B.S.) pp. 62-63.
263. *Bānglāra Itihāsa*, I, pp. 87-88.
264. *History of Orissa*, I, pp. 128f.
265. *I.H.Q.*, VI, pp. 442-43.
266. K.L. Barua, *J.A.R.S.*, 1934, pp. 97-103; *E.H.K.*, p. 67.
267. Raychaudhuri, *P.H.A.I.*, p. 609.

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The next disputed question to be decided is, whether South-east Bengal, including Sylhet, Tripurā and portions of *Samataṭa*, was within Bhāskara's sway. While J. C. Ghosh,[268] Bhattasali,[269] A.C. Chaudhury [270] and others support the theory of the inclusion of Sylhet within Kāmarūpa on the basis of the location of the Nidhanpur grant, P. Bhattacharya,[271] K.L. Barua [272] and others assert that Sylhet lay outside Kāmarūpa. The question of the location of the land granted, has already been discussed in connection with the reign of Bhūtivarman, and we have shown that it is to be located in *Puṇḍravardhana*. The fact that Sylhet is separately mentioned, for instance, by Yuan Chwang or in the *Sādhanāmālā*, the *Yoginī Tantra* and other sources, cannot make a strong ground for assumption, as done by P. Bhattacharya [273] that it was not within the kingdom of Kāmarūpa. The reference may be to a geographical unit rather than a political one. The fact is that throughout the period of the said works Sylhet was within Kāmarūpa. That South-east Bengal including Sylhet, Tripurā, portions of Dacca, Mymensingh and other regions were already under Bhūtivarman, can be proved by the existing materials.[274] Bhattacharya's belief regarding the independent status of Sylhet, on the basis of an epigraph of Īśvarādevī of Jālandhara,[275] is wrong ; we have shown that the epithet, '*Śrīhaṭṭādhīśvarebhyaḥ,*' occurring in the grant, has nothing to do with the political status of Sylhet. We have also shown that it is equally wrong to rely on the tradition by which a king of Tripurā in A. D. 641 is credited with the donation of land to Brāhmaṇas in Sylhet. If he was identical with the king Ādi-Dharmaphā, who flourished, according to Tripurā chronicles, about the same time, [276] we may assume that the grant was made in the capacity of a feudatory chief of Bhāskara. But unless the plates confirming the grant are found, we cannot be certain of the historicity of the grant itself.

One interesting piece of historical material of this period is the Tippera grant of the feudatory chief, Lokanātha, which throws a new

268. *I.H.Q.*, VI, pp. 60-71; *I.C.*, II, pp. 153-57; D. R. Bhandarkar, *I.A.*, LXVI, pp. 41-55, 61-72.
269. *J.A.S.B.* (Letters) I, pp. 419-27.
270. *Śrīhaṭṭer Itivṛtta*, IV (f.n.) p. 74.
271. *K.S.*, p. 5; *J.A.S.B.* (Letters) III, pp. 45-51; *J.A.R.S.*, IV pp. 58-66; *E.I.*, XIX, pp. 115f; *K.S.*, Intro. p. 17; *I.H.Q.*, III, pp. 839-46.
272. *I.C.*, I, pp. 421-32, 701-702; the writer holds a different view in another place: (*E.H.K.*, p. 89).
273. *K.S.* (Intro.), pp. 5, 17; *J.A.S.B.* (Letters), III, pp. 45-51; *J.A.R.S.*, IV, pp. 58-66; *E.I.*, XIX, pp. 115f.
274. See Bhattasali, *J.A.S.B.* (Letters), I, pp. 419-27; K.L. Barua, *J.A.R.S.*, III. pp. 92f.
275. *E.I.*, I, pp. 10-12.
276. K.L. Barua, *J.A.R.S.*, III, pp. 92-98.

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light on the question of Bhāskara's sway over Sylhet and Tripurā. The grant, in the opinion of R. G. Basak, contains a date in the Harṣa era: 44= A. D. 650. The grant mentions Lokanātha's liege-lord, Jayatuṅgavarṣa, who is said to have helped Lokanātha in the latter's war against another feudatory, Jīvadhāraṇa. Basak identifies the liege-lord of Lokanātha with Ādityasena or some other ruler.[277] B. C. Sen takes him as Dharmapāla of Gauḍa,[278] which is chronologically improbable. Majumdar takes him to be a Khaḍga ruler,[279] which also is wrong, since there is no conclusive proof to show that the Khaḍgas held sway over Tripurā or Sylhet. N. N. Vasu, taking Jayatuṅga as Jayatuṅgavarman, identifies him with some successor of Bhāskara, on the supposition that the date is the G. E. 344 = A. D. 663.[280] K. L. Barua identifies Jayatuṅga with Śālastambha and holds that he assumed this title after dethroning Avantivarman.[281] But all these assumptions lack convincing proof. As we shall show, Bhāskara's successor was Śālastambha himself, who can be identified with Avantivarman. The date, as read by Basak, is 44; it was probably in the Kāmarūpa era, started by Bhāskara in A. D. 594 and, therefore, the grant is to be dated in about (44+594)= A. D. 638. Bhāskara's political sway over South-east Bengal is testified by Yuan Chwang, who states that the rulers of Kāmarūpa had the sea-route to China under their protection.[282] This is one of the strongest grounds in favour of our contention that Bhāskara held sway over Sylhet and Tripurā. If our date of the grant (638) is tenable, Jayatuṅga may be identical with Bhāskara, who was the liege-lord of Lokanātha, and Jīvadhāraṇa was probably another feudatory of Kāmarūpa, established in Sylhet, who went to war with Lokanātha. On these grounds it is fair to conclude that both Tripurā and Sylhet were under Bhāskara. The Nidhanpur grant mentions a number of feudatories of Bhāskara, who "made the circle of (related) powers attached to him and equalled the powers of the ring of his feudatories by the strength of his own arms"[283] and "vanquished hundreds of kings in battle, who spoke in praise of him".[284]

277. *E.I.*, XV, pp. 301-312; *H.N.E.I.*, pp. 195f.

278. *Some Historical Aspects of the Inscriptions of Bengal*, etc. p. 354; T. Bloch places the grant during the 9th-10th century A.D. (*A.R.A.S.I.*, 1903-4, p. 118).

279. *History of Bengal*, I, p. 88.

280. *Social History of Kāmarūpa*, III, pp. 19-20, 45. D. R. Bhandarkar takes the date 144 as Harṣa era=(750 A.D.): (*I.A.*, LXI, 1932, p. 44).

281. *J.A.R.S.*, I, pp. 97-103.

282. *Life*, Intro. pp. xvi-xvii.

283. Nidhanpur grant, Lines 34f.

284. *Ibid*; *E.I.*, XII, p. 78.

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The *Nālandā Clay Seal* of Bhāskara provides further historical materials in support of our contention that the bounds of Kāmarūpa reached the region even beyond Bengal. The seal contains the genealogy of the ancestors of Bhāskara and mentions a number of horse sacrifices as being performed by some of them. The remark of K. N. Dikshit that the seals might have been affixed to a letter of invitation to Yuan Chwang while he was at *Nālandā*,[285] is merely a guess. P. L. Paul, in order to strengthen his theory of the subordination of Kāmarūpa to Harṣa, attaches no importance to it.[286] D. C. Sircar, while admitting "that the seal belongs to the period of Kāmarūpa occupation of Bihar", holds on the contrary that "the occupation of Bihar is rendered doubtful by the fact that Harṣa probably established the Later Guptas in Magadha during the concluding years of his life.—The seal may then be connected with Bhāskaravarman's stay in South Bihar in the year 643 A.D."[287] But there is no conclusive proof that the Guptas were established in Magadha by Harṣa. K. L. Barua supposes that both Harṣa and Bhāskara left their seals in *Nālandā* to commemorate their visit.[288] N. N. Dasgupta rightly contends that though it is difficult to say when Bhāskara "extended his conquests up to the Nālandā region—the discovery of his seal at *Nālandā*— is not an accidental phenomenon".[289] In any case, it must have had a political significance.

It is worth noting that Bhāskara's association with the region existed long before his march with the pilgrim to meet Harṣa by A. D. 643. Bhāskara heard of the pilgrim at *Nālandā* from a Kāmarūpa Brāhmaṇa, who went there to engage in a controversy.[289a] This seems also clear from his invitation to Śilabhadra, asking him to send the pilgrim to Kāmarūpa. The story may have been exaggerated; but there is certainly a kernel of truth in it. Bhāskara is said to have sent his last messenger to Śilabhadra with a letter, reading thus: "if he (the pilgrim) does not come, your disciple will then let the evil portion of himself prevail.—If necessary then I will equip my army and elephants and like the clouds sweep down on and trample to the very dust that monastery of *Nālandā*".[290]

285. *J.B.O.R.S.*, VI, pp. 151-52.
286. *I.H.Q.*, XII, pp. 63-83.
287. *I.H.Q.*, XIX, pp. 278-81.
288. *E.H.K.*, p. 98.
289. *I.C.*, II, pp. 37-45.
289a. According to another account as many as 200 Brāhmaṇas went to Nālandā to engage in a controversy with Yuan Chwang, who being defeated, are said to have settled in the neighbouring regions, but did not return to Kāmarūpa.
290. Watters, I, p. 348; *Life of Yuan Chwang*, pp. 165f.

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He could not have sent such a strong letter, had *Nālandā* not been within the sphere of his influence. When it came into his possession is uncertain; but it appears that after its occupation Bhāskara probably established a relation of his in the region. This is confirmed by the accounts of I-Tsing, who states that the temple lands along with the revenue of 20 villages near about *Nālandā* belonging originally to Śrīgupta, reverted to Devavarmā of Eastern India who was willing to give back the whole endowment in case any priest came from China.[291] The location of this China temple is disputed. R. C. Majumdar places it in *Mṛgasthāpana* "in Varendra or not far from its boundary on the bank of the Bhāgīrathī and the Padmā".[292] B. P. Sinha places it in modern U. P. to the west of Magadha.[293] D. C. Ganguly locates it in modern Murshidabad in Bengal.[294] But, these identifications appear to be doubtful. I-Tsing writes that "two stages to the east of the Mahābodhi is a temple called Kiu-lu-kea.—About forty stages east of this, following the course of the Ganges is the Deer temple and not far from it is a ruined establishment—called the China temple".[295] I-Tsing gives his itinerary in a very confused manner; but it appears from the accounts that the China temple lay not very far from *Nālandā*, and, therefore the *Mṛgaśikhāvana agrahāra* or the China temple can be reasonably located near the border of Bihar and Bengal. Devavarman "whose kingdom included the Nālandā region (in the west) appears in the best of probability to have been a lineal descendant of Bhāskaravarman, who bore the same title 'varmā', equally described as the 'king of Eastern India', who ruled in the first half of the seventh century A. D. and whose seal has been discovered at Nālandā".[296] It appears probable that Devavarman was established by Bhāskara over the *Nālandā* region towards the end of his reign perhaps after the departure of Yuan Chwang.

The epithet 'king of Eastern India', applied to Bhāskara by the Chinese sources, seems to have an important bearing on his political status in Eastern India.[297] It is something, as remarked by N. N. Das Gupta, "the significance of which seems to be much greater than it is ordinarily supposed to be".[298] It may have been applied owing to the fact

291. *J.R.A.S.*, 1881, 558-72; *I.A.*, 1881, 109-11, 192-93.
292. *History of Bengal*, I, p. 68; *New History of the Indian People*, VI, p. 129.
293. *J.B.O.R.S.*, 1951, pp. 138-144.
294. *I.H.Q.*, XIV, pp. 532f.
295. *Life*, XXVIf (note I); also Chavannes, *Voyages des Pelerins Bouddhistes*, pp. 82-84.
296. N.N. Das Gupta, *I.C.*, II, p. 39.
297. See P.L. Paul (*I.H.Q.*, XII, 63-83) who attaches no importance to it.
298. *I.C.*, II, pp. 37-45.

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that Bhāskara's kingdom included the whole of Assam, great portions of Bengal and some portions of Bihar or at least the *Nālandā* region. This is in consonance with the statement made by the pilgrim that the rulers of Kāmarūpa had the sea-route to China under their protection,[299] evindently through the delta of the Ganges and the Brahmaputra, opening to the Bay of Bengal. There is a substratum of truth, though not the whole truth, in the statement of B. M. Barua that the *Yoginī Tantra's* definition of Kāmarūpa, from *Karatoyā* to Sadiyā, is wide enough to indicate the vastness of Bhāskara's kingdom;[300] but the kingdom was certainly larger than this, and than what B. C. Sen thinks it to have been, who places it, on the basis of the same work, to the east of the Brahmaputra.[301] We must go beyond these limits to include the *Nālandā* region in the west and the regions bordering on China in the east, as evidenced by Yuan Chwang, who states thus: "To the east of Kāmarūpa the country was a series of hills and hillocks without any principal city, and it reached the south-west barbarians (of China).—The pilgrim learned from the people (of Kāmarūpa) that the south-west borders of Szuchuan were distant about two months' journey—. In the south-east of the country were wild elephants which ranged in herds".[302] The accounts testify that Kāmarūpa touched the borders of Burma and China. Moreover, the route of the pilgrim's journey to Kāmarūpa supports our view on the limits of the kingdom in the west. The pilgrim crossed a large river and entered Kāmarūpa.[303] The kingdom was, according to him, "more than a myriad li in circuit and its capital about thirty li".[304] The large river, which is mentioned in the *T'ang Shu* as *Kalotu*, is identified with the Brahmaputra by Watters;[305] Cunningham identifies it with the Teestā, and further adds that the capital, visited by the pilgrim, lay in Koch Bihar,[306] which is wrong. S. N. Majumdar rightly identifies the capital with Gauhati and the river with the *Karatoyā*.[307] The *T'ang Shu's Kalotu* is evidently the *Karatoyā*. Yuan Chwang's Kāmarūpa, therefore, was large enough to include portions of Bihar, great portions of Bengal, including the Bengal delta and almost the whole of modern Assam. Bhāskara

299. *Life*, XVIf.
300. *I.H.Q.*, XXIII, 200-220; also P. Bhattacharya, *K.S.* (Intro.), p. 17.
301. *E.I.*, I, pp. 30, 84.
302. Watters, II, pp. 185f; Beal, II, pp. 195f.
303. *Ibid.*
304. Watters, II, pp. 185f.
305. *Ibid.*
306. *Ancient Geography of India*, pp. 572-73.
307. S.N. Majumdar, *Cunningham's Ancient Geography of India*, pp. 572-73 (note).

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truly justifies the appellation, applied to him by the Chinese sources as the 'king of Eastern India'.

What adds special significance to the career of Bhāskara is his association with the pilgrim and his desire for having an insight into Buddhism. This becomes evident from his letter of invitation to *Nālandā*. When Yung Chwang came to Kāmarūpa, Bhāskara made all provisions for music, banquets, and religious offerings in his capital. The pilgrim was there for about a month. The date of his visit can be placed at about A. D. 643. Cunnigham's supposition that he visited Kāmarūpa twice,[308] is not supported by any evidence.

It appears from the conversation between the king and the pilgrim that the former was long attracted to China. We may not rely so much upon the literary accuracy of the accounts; but these seem to throw a light on the political and cultural relations between Kāmarūpa and China. "Although I am without talent myself", the king is purported to have told the pilgrim, , "I have always been fond of conspicuous learning. Hearing then of your fame and distinction, I ventured to ask you here to visit me.—Now through the kingdoms of India there are many persons who sing about the victories of the T'sin king of the Mahā-Cīna country. I have long heard of this—I have ever had an esteem towards the east, but the intervening mountains and rivers have prevented me from personally visiting it".[309] The song refers to the victory of the prince of T'sin, the second son of the Tang emperor, Kaotsu over the rebels in A.D. 619. It appears that after Yuan Chwang's return to China, Bhāskara exchanged envoys with China and showed a keen interest in Taoism. When the two envoys Li-Yi-Piao and Wang-Heuen-tse visited India (643-46), Bhāskara asked them to send a portrait of Lao-tse and a Sanskrit translation of the Tao-toh-king.[310] Under the order of the emperor, Yuan Chwang translated the work and may have sent it to Bhāskara.[310a] The evidence indicates the cultural contact between Kāmarūpa and China.

The next period of Bhāskara's career was spent with Harṣa who, after returning from his Koṅgoda campaign, sent a messenger to bring

308. *Ancient Geography of India*, p. lxix.

309. Beal, II, pp. 197f; Watters, I, p. 348.

310. P.C. Bagchi, *India and China*, pp. 200f; Levi, *Pre-Aryan and Pre-Dravidian in India*, pp. 114-15.

310a. This treatise on Taoism is said to have constituted the basis of *Sahajayāna*, which is likely to have been propagated by Bhāskaravarman himself.

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back the pilgrim from Kāmarūpa. Bhāskara, however, did not want to part with the company of the pilgrim and, therefore, the reply sent to Harṣa was rather rude: "He (Harṣa) can take my head, but he cannot take the Master of the Law yet". Harṣa met the situation by an appropriate reply: "Send the head, that I may have it immediately by my messenger, who is to bring it here".[311] Bhāskara then started with the pilgrim and met Harṣa on the bank of the Ganges near Rājmahal.[312] Harṣa's orders read like an ultimatum. We cannot guess what would have followed next, had Bhāskara disobeyed it. The whole story seems to centre around the pilgrim, whose importance has been so enhanced by his biographer. Bhāskara's compliance with the order does not, however, indicate blind obedience to Harṣa, but shows that he had as much keen interest in the pilgrim as Harṣa had. Harṣa's desire for the presence of the pilgrim in his capital was apparently connected with his preparations for holding religious ceremonies. Harṣa might have assumed an air of superiority, but Bhāskara's participation in the ceremonies with his followers, with the full glory befitting an independent sovereign, does not make us believe that the Kāmarūpa king was considered as a vassal by Harṣa. Bhāskara participated in the ceremonies and attended upon the pilgrim not because of the fact that he wanted to please Harṣa, but because of his respect for the pilgrim and keen interest in Buddhism.

It was in the fitness of things that the two chief monarchs of Northern India should take a leading part in the ceremonies, held at *Kanauj* and *Prayāga* in honour of the Chinese priest and Buddhism. These events made this period of Indian history memorable indeed, and at both Bhāskara was received with due honour. In the procession carrying the image of the Buddha at the Kanauj Assembly "Silāditya Rājā, under the form of lord *Śakra* with a white chowrie in his hand, went to the right, and *Kumāra-Rājā*, under the form of *Brahma* with a precious parasol in his hand, went to the left".[313] In the ceremony at *Prayāga*, Harṣa had his camp on the north bank of the Ganges and Bhāskara on the south bank of the Yamunā by the side of a flowery grove.[314] The ceremony was solemnised with lavish gifts to people of all sects by Harṣa, and "thus established a record in individual charity and liberality, hardly equalled in history".[315]

311. *Life*, pp. 165f; Watters, I, p. 348.
312. *Ibid.*
313. *Life*, pp. 177-78; Beal, I, pp. 215f.
314. *Life*, pp. 185f.
315. R.S. Tripathi, *History of Kanauj*, p. 161.

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Shortly after the ceremonies, the pilgrim made his preparations to return to China, but Bhāskara requested him to stay in his kingdom. The statement made in this connection is significant, because it shows Bhāskara's leanings towards Buddhism.[316] The pilgrim refused to stay; but of all the valuable presents offered to him, he accepted only one from Bhāskara, a cap of skin for protection against rain. Immediately after the pilgrim's return, Bhāskara came back to Kāmarūpa. Thus ended a chapter of the history of Kāmarūpa, marked by intimate relations between Harṣa, Bhāskara and Yuan Chwang. As his grants show, Bhāskara probably spent the remaining period of his reign in peaceful activities.

The accounts of the pilgrim throw much light on the accomplishments of Bhāskara and on the conditions of the people and the kingdom during his time. "The country was low and moist, the crops were regular; the jack-fruit and coconut were in great esteem though plentiful; there were continuous streams and tanks to the towns; the climate was genial. The people were of honest ways–their speech differed a little from that of Mid India". The students were meritorious, and "they worshipped the Devas—the deva temples were some hundreds in number and the various systems had some myriads of professed adherents. The reigning king, who was a Brāhmiṇ by caste and a descendant of Nārāyaṇa Deva, was named Bhāskaravarman—the sovereignty had been transmitted in the family and his subjects for 1000 generations. His Majesty was a lover of learning and his subjects followed his example; men of ability came from far-off lands to study here; though the king was not a Buddhist he treated accomplished Śramaṇas with respect".[317] There are some wrong statements in the pilgrim's observations. It is impossible that the family ruled for a thousand generations; the pilgrim in stating thus might have recorded a tradition he heard of. This may have a reference to the reign of about one thousand years. Equally mistaken is his reference to Bhāskara as a Brāhmaṇa by caste. This he certainly wrote under the impression that the king descended from *Viṣṇu*. R.G. Basak explains this by holding that he "was a Brāhmaṇical Hindu in religion".[318] It is true that one's surname does not always prove one's lineage. But, if the ancestors of the king, as we have shown elsewhere, may be traced back to the Alpines of the priestly order, Yuan Chwang's testimony may have some significance.[319] By the time of the pilgrim's visit, the rulers definitely became

316. See *Life*, pp. 187f. As remarked by an authority on Yuan Chwang, Bhāskaravarman, along with his Ministers, became lay members of the faith: (A. Walley, The *Real Tripitaka* pp. 59-60.)

317. Watters, II, pp. 185f; Beal, II, pp. 195f.

318. *H.N.E.I.*, p. 230.

319. See N.N. Vasu, *Social History of Kāmarūpa*. 1, p. 154

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Brāhmaṇical Hindus, though they adopted the title 'Varman', appropriate to other classes.

Inscriptions bear testimony to the many sided qualities and achievements of this one of the greatest rulers of ancient Assam. As the Nidhanpur grant states, he was born to dispel darkness from his kingdom and to establish religion by making provisions for the proper organisation of classes and stages of life and ministering to the needs of learning. Because of his patronage, Kāmarūpa became a noted centre of learning, attracting students from outside. Learning was encouraged by his liberal gifts. He became an example for his subjects. He was, as it were, "the very life of *Dharma*, the abode of justice, the home of virtues, the treasury of supplicants, the shelter of the terrified and the temple of plenty". He made provisions for the Brāhmaṇas and other higher classes by donating lands, and Kāmarūpa during the 7th century A.D. became a centre of Aryan culture; the kingdom came under the civilising influence of the *Āryya-dharma*, whaterver the origin of the rulers and the ruled. It had been the systematic policy of the rulers to open *agrahāra* settlements for the Brāhmaṇas and other high class Aryans not only in the centre of the kingdom but also in distant places like *Chandrapurī*. The contact of Kāmarūpa with Sylhet, Tripurā, Bengal, Orissa, Mithilā, Magadha and Kanauj, as with China, had been going on for some time past. It was closer with Mithilā. With the expansion of the political sway of the Varman line of kings, large portions of Eastern India came under the cultural ideas of Kāmarūpa. It is rightly remarked that its influence spread to the islands in the Pacific, and some of the architectural remains in Cambodia, Annam and other places are possibly to be attributed to the influence of the rulers of Kāmarūpa. Bhūtivarman gave proof of his patronage of the Brāhmaṇical religion by settling many Brāhmaṇas in the kingdom; this was followed by his able successor. How, under the influence of these people and their descendants in Kāmarūpa, Gauḍa, Orissa and other lands, the social life was moulded, proves to be a story of absorbing interest. Their influence increased from the time of Bhāskara, under whom the cultural traits and languages of Kāmarūpa, Gauḍa and Kaliṅga tended to be somewhat similar; a good evidence of this close contact can be detected even now among those places which were once under the political and cultural influence of Kāmarūpa.[320]

The many sided kingly virtues of Bhāskara earned for him the deep loyalty of the people. Though a great devotee of *Śiva*, as testified by his

320. See Vasu, *Social History of Kāmarūpa*, III, pp. 13f.

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grants and Bāṇa, his was a catholic mind. Being possessed of a tolerant and pious character, it was natural that towards the end of his career he showed a special leaning towards Buddhism, and even adopted the faith.[321] The fact that he was able to leave his kingdom to travel with Yuan Chwang and spend some time at Harṣa's court testifies to the smooth working of the government of his kingdom. Had it been otherwise, his absence from the kingdom would have invited rebellion. Hence, with a vast well organised administrative machinery, Bhāskara gave a good example of truth and justice, holding before his subjects the ideal of a paternal king in the proper organisation of the State. Both for the moral and for the material welfare of his subjects, he devoted a major part of his eventful life. His presents to Harṣa give us some idea of the state of material progress that the people had reached during the 7th century A.D. If Bāṇabhatta is to be believed, Kāmarūpa had a well-established tradition in the domain of literature and education, more so in the industrial arts of various kinds, which was well demonstrated by its illustrious king Bhāskara.

321. The *Tao-to-king*, a treatise on Taoism, the Sanskrit version of which the king is said to have obtained from China, contained in it the essence of *Sahajayāna*, and it is believed that he became responsible for the spread of this cult in Kāmarūpa. It was perhaps under the influence of this, that Bhāskaravarman kept concubines, a reference to which is made in Dāmodara Gupta's *Kuṭṭanīmataṁ* : (See Cultural History, Section I.)

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Section 3

THE LINE OF ŚĀLASTAMBHA

1. Śālastambha—founder of a new line of kings:

Inscriptions show that Śālastambha established a new line in Prāgjyotiṣa; his relationship with Bhāskaravarman is, however, unknown. In fact, the enlightened reign of the latter was followed by an obscure period. The genealogy given in the records of the family no doubt traces its descent from the ancient *Bhauma* dynasty, and we shall show that the connection between the two was maintained, at least distantly.

The rise of Śālastambha was nothing accidental as it may appear to some writers. The *Hara-Gaurī Saṁvāda* [1] seems to give a clue to this otherwise dark period. We have already pointed out that, according to this text, after the end of the period of the family of Naraka-Bhagadatta, came a prince from the west, named Mādhava, who established himself in Kāmarūpa a new line having twenty-one kings. This number is exactly the same as that of the line of Śālastambha, as given in the grants, the twenty-first being Tyāgasiṁha.[2] It may be presumed, therefore, that Mādhava is identical with Śālastambha of the inscriptions. It is very significant that Mādhava is said to have come from the west, perhaps from the region around *Nālandā*, which may for a time have been an out-post of the empire of Bhāskaravarman. It is also possible to identify him with Devavarman, who, if the evidence of I-Tsing is to be believed, was a king of Eastern India, holding sway over the region about *Nālandā*, and this prince, in the beginning of his political career, may have been established there by Bhāskara as a local ruler or a governor. We have already referred to the China temple, said to have been originally built by Śrīgupta, which, along with the *agrahāras* of twenty villages, was at the time in the possession of Devavarmā, and he is said to have been willing to give back the whole endowment to any priest coming from China.[3] Devavarman, the king of

1. *Chapters* VI-VII; See also P.C. Bagchi, *I.H.Q.*, XVIII, p. 231-60.

2. Bargāon grant of Ratnapāla, V. 10. Informations about Śālastambha and his successors, as given in the recent publications of the *Bhāratīya Vidyābhavan*, are no doubt meagre: (*The Classical Age*, III, pp. 139f; *The Age of Imperial Kanauj*, IV, pp. 60-61).

3. *Life of Yuan Chwang*, Intro., xxvi-xxvii; also *J.R.A.S.*, 1881 pp. 558-72; *I.A.*, 1881, pp. 109-11, 192-93.

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Eastern India, was most probably a relative of Bhāskaravarman, or belonged to at least a collateral branch of the family of the Varmans.

The identification of Devavarman of the records of I-Tsing is, however, disputed. According to P.L. Paul, this prince is to be identified with Devagupta, son of Ādityasena.[4] R.C. Majumdar takes him to be Devakhaḍga, a Khaḍga ruler.[5] The same view is held by N.K. Bhattasali.[6] It is on this ground that Bhattasali thinks that the past glory of the empire builders of the kingdom of Kāmarūpa departed immediately after Bhāskara, as about this time, the writer believes, Devakhaḍga, mentioned in the Ashrafpur inscription,[7] carved out a big kingdom in *Samataṭa*, and the same plate is believed by Bhattasali to refer to Bhāskara by the epithet, '*Bṛhatparameśvara*', the former's liege-lord. Two other kings, Lokanātha of Tripurā and Kāntideva of the Chittagong area are also said to have declared their independence, indicating the weakening of the central authority of Kāmarūpa, until at last Śālastambha about A.D. 700 overwhelmed the dynasty of Bhāskara.[8]

The whole theory of the writer seems to contradict the evidence of the existing materials. Devavarman can hardly be identified with a little known Khaḍga ruler; nor is the theory of the independence of Tripurā and other regions immediately after Bhāskara to be supported. Śālastambha, as we shall show, did not overthrow the line or the dynasty of Bhāskara. Lokanātha, as we have suggested, was a feudatory of Bhāskara and continued to be so along with other minor chiefs of Eastern Bengal as long as the rulers of Kāmarūpa remained the lords of Eastern India. D.R. Bhandarkar, identifying Devavarman with a Kāmarūpa ruler, takes him and his successor Harṣadeva to be the son and grandson of Bhāskara.[9] While his identification is correct, it is unlikely that Devavarman was Bhāskara's son; and Harṣadeva was not the successor of the former. K.L. Barua rightly identifies him with Śālastambha, but places Avantivarman in between them, on the basis of his theory that a gap of about 5-10 years elapsed between Bhāskara and Śālastambha, and during this period Avantivarman ruled. "It is very probable," writes Barua, "that before

4. *I.H.Q.*, XII, pp. 67-83.
5. *J.A.S.B.*, 1923, pp. 376-78; *History of Bengal*, I, p. 87.
6. *J.A.S.B.*, 1914, pp. 86-87; N.K. Bhattasali, *Iconography of the Buddhist, etc.*, p. 6.
7. *M.A.S.B.*, I, pp. 85f; *P.A.S.B.*, 1885, pp. 49f; *Ibid*, 1890, pp. 242-43; *Ibid*, 1891, p. 119.
8. *I.H.Q.*, XXI, pp. 19f; the statement of R.M. Nath that a *Mleccha* dynasty was founded by Śālastambha after overthrowing Avantivarman, is unfounded, (*Background of Assamese Culture*, pp. 40f).
9. *E.I.*, App. (XIX-XXIII), pp. 379-406.

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670 A.D. Śālastambha successfully revolted, and dethroning the immediate successor of Bhāskaravarman, proclaimed himself a king, perhaps assuming the high sounding name of Jayatuṅgavarman."[10] He further adds that Avantivarman was uprooted by Śālastambha alias Jayatuṅga, who was the king mentioned as Devavarman by I-Tsing.[11] We have already shown that Jayatuṅga is to be identified with Bhāskara. The supposed gap between Bhāskara and Śālastambha is not supported by any genuine source, and we have reasons to believe that Śālastambha was not an usurper. As we have suggested, Devavarman was probably a relative of Bhāskara. The Khaḍgas could not have held sway at any time over *Nālandā*. So "there is nothing that goes against finding in Devavarman a successor of Bhāskaravarman".[12] We have also suggested that Devavarman is to be identified with Mādhava of the Assamese Chronicles, whom we have tried to identify with Śālastambha. It is likely, therefore, that Devavarman was the same as Śālastambha. This appears to have been indicated also by the system of chronology, discussed below.

To us Devavarman appears to be an inversion of the surname 'Varmādeva', taken by the rulers of the Varman line and even by some, such as Harjjaravarman and Balavarman, of the line of Śālastambha himself. If this inference is correct, Devavarman can be identified with Avantivarman and if this can be shown, the supposed gap between Bhāskara and Śālastambha would no longer be tenable. The name Avantivarman is found in the last line of the last stanza of *Mūdrārākṣasa*; but the name varies in different manuscripts, and is given as Chandragupta, Dantivarman, Ratnavarman and many others. Particular attention to the reading of the name Avantivarman has been drawn by Telang[13] and K.H. Dhruva in their editions of the play. K.P. Jayaswal thinks that the true reading is Chandragupta, whom he identifies with Chandragupta II;[14] S. Ray takes the same view.[15] But the question of the correct reading of the name of the prince rests on the date of *Mūdrārākṣasa*. J. Charpentier places the work in the late 5th century A.D.;[16] S.K. Śāstri sometime after A.D. 388 and before A.D. 415;[17] Jacobi, A.D. 700-900[18] and Macdonell not later

10. *J.A.R.S.*, I. pp. 97-103; *Ibid*, VI, pp. 12-18.
11. *J.A.R.S.*, I. pp. 97-103.
12. N.N. Desgupta, *I.C.*, II, pp. 37-45.
13. *I.A.*, XLIII, p. 67; *J.R.A.S.*, 1910, p. 535.
14. *I.A.*, XLII, p. 265; *J.R.A.S.*, 1923, pp. 586-87.
15. *Intro. to the Mūdrārākṣasa*, pp. 9-14.
16. *I.H.Q.*, VII, p. 629.
17. *I.H.Q.*, VII, pp. 163-167.
18. *Viena Oriental Journal*, II, pp. 212-16; also Keith,, *J.R.A.S.* 1909, pp. 145-49.

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than A.D. 800.[19] In any case, the ornate style of the work suggests that it is appreciably later than the plays of Kālidāsa, and it is likely that Viśākhadatta flourished during the 7th century A.D. It is also probable that Avantivarman was his contemporary, in which case, the correct reading of the name as Avantivarman, appears likely. Dhruva identifies him with Avantivarman Maukhari, father of Grahavarman;[20] R.S. Tripathi seems to hold the same view.[21] But, the reference in the play to the *Varāha* incarnation of *Viṣṇu* seems to indicate that Avantivarman was a Kāmarūpa ruler. As J.C. Ghosh observes, Avantivarman of the play was certainly a successor of Bhāskara as the reference in the play to the *Varāhāvatāra* refers to the *Bhauma* dynasty.[22]

K.L. Barua, supporting this identification, holds that the "supposition is strengthened by the fact that the danger of the *Mleccha* revolt, as referred to in the *śloka*, was actually imminent in Kāmarūpa when the strong rule of Bhāskaravarman ended with his death—it appears that Śālastambha the leader or governor—usurped the throne by deposing Bhāskaravarman's immediate successor. The danger which the author of the *Mūdrārākṣasa* feared, actually materialised—Śālastambha occupied the throne of Kāmarūpa about 655 A.D. after dethroning and probably killing him (Avantivarman)".[23] The existing materials do not confirm the view that Bhāskara was in danger of revolt at any time, and the actual interpretation of the stanza of the play will prove the contrary. It means that Avantivarman was destined to fight the *Mleccha* revolt and save the kingdom just like *Viṣṇu*, who in his Boar incarnation lifted up the earth from universal dissolution. The revolt may refer to a general discontent prevailing at that time between the Buddhist followers of Bhāskaravarman and those of the Brāhmaṇical Hindu pantheon, who probably tried to establish a scion of their own; but Devavarman, evidently a Buddhist, seated himself on the throne and established order in the kingdom. The statement appears to refer to the period immediately after Bhāskara's death, who probably did not leave any direct heir to the throne; hence the question of the dethronement or murder of Avantivarman does not arise. In all appearance, it appears reasonable to hold that Avantivarman was the immediate successor of Bhāskara.

But while epigraphs mention Śālastambha, not a single reference is made to Avantivarman. The origin and connection of the former have

19. *India's Past*, p. 111; *A History of Sanskrit Literature*, p. 365.
20. *Intro. to the Mūdrārākṣasa*, p. XIf.
21. *History of Kanauj*, pp. 49-50.
22. *J.P.A.S.B.*, XXVI (N.S.), p. 244.
23. *E.H.K.*, pp. 109-110.

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also been disputed on the basis of a misleading statement in the Bargāon grant of Ratnapāla (v. 9) which states thus: "After thus, for several generations, kings of Naraka's dynasty had ruled the whole country, a great chief of the *Mlecchas*, owing to a turn of (adverse) fate, took possession of the kingdom. (This was) Śālastambha: (*Mlecchādhināthо vidhicalana-vaśādeva jagrāha rājyaṁ*). In succession to him there were chiefs altogether twice ten (twenty) in number who are well-known as Vigrahastambha and the rest." Hoernle explains the word '*mleccha*' as a foreigner.[24] H.C. Ray holds that whether Śālastambha established a different line, or belonged to a collateral branch of the Varman line, is hard to decide. It is also not conclusive that Bhāskara is mentioned as a Brāhmin by caste in the accounts of Yuan Chwang and Śālastambha is called a '*mlecchādhinātha*': for Bhāskara traces his descent from Bhagadatta who is described in the *Mahābhārata* as a '*mlecchānāṁ adhipati*'. "If there is any historical fact in the description of the epic", contends Ray, "then there is reason to regard Bhagadatta as a prince of the non-Aryan Tibeto-Chinese races referred to as Cīnas and Kirātas in Ancient Indian literature. It appears that the line of Puṣyavarman and that of Śālastambha were closely related, in as much as both were of Mongolian origin—it would be safer to regard the two dynasties as separate Mongolian groups, who each accepted Aryan culture and sought to establish their blue blood by claiming descent from that epic hero." [25] The designation, '*mleccha*' is a very wide term, which was used by the Aryan Brāhmaṇas to stand for all non-Aryans. It was used in the same sense as the Greeks used the word 'barbarians' for the non-Greeks. It is difficult to find that the term stood merely for the Mongolians. It may stand for the Buddhists, so-called by the Brāhmaṇical writers of the epigraphs. Moreover, Ray's argument appears to have been based on a misinterpretation of the texts, he has mentioned. '*Mlecchādhinātha*' may not necessarily mean that the ruler also was a *mleccha*. Bhāskara's caste we have discussed in another connection, and tried to show that the pilgrim's statement that the king was a Brāhmaṇa by caste may have been based more or less on a genuine foundation. In discussing the origin of Bhagadatta and the connection of the Varman family, we have also shown that he was probably an Alpine chief, perhaps of a priestly class, and before the introduction of the Aryan culture, he and his family were designated as *mlecchas*. The probable connection between the Varman and Śālastambha lines seems to point to their common descent from the *Bhauma* dynasty, established by Alpine chiefs, and not to the fact that they were separate Mongolian groups.

24. *J.A.S.B.*, LXVII, I, pp. 103–4.
25. *D.H.N.I.*, I, p. 240.

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K.L. Baura, explaining the word '*Mlecchādhinātha*', supposes that it means the governor of the Mech country. He further adds that when Bhāskara died, Śālastambha organised a revolt and dethroning the immediate successor of the former, became king, and that Śālastambha belonged to the dynasty of Bhāskara, for nobles of the royal family were often appointed as governors.[26] Barua's contention that Śālastambha was related to Bhāskara and that he was a governor, may be tenable, but it is yet to be proved that he was a governor of the Mech country and revolted against the family of Bhāskara. P. Bhattacharya seems to be right in holding that Śālastambha, like Brahmapāla, belonged to a collateral branch of the *Bhauma* dynasty.[27] Hence, R.C. Majumdar's theory that "Bhāskaravarman was shortly after overthrown by a barbarian, Śālastambha by name",[28] or that the greatness of Kāmarūpa passed away with Bhāskara, is merely a guess, not being supported by any genuine evidence.

That Naraka and his descendants were called *mlecchas*, is stated in the Hayuṅthāl grant of Harjjaravarman (v. 2) thus: (*ato mlecchābhidhānāstu bhaviṣyāstava Pārthiva*) "Your future progeny, o'mighty king, will, therefore, be designated as *mlecchas*". The actual reason may have been contained in the first plate, which is missing. The statement either refers to the non-Aryan habits of the predecessors of Śālastambha or to the fact that they were known as *mlecchas* owing to their Alpine origin and leanings towards Buddhism. It possibly recalls the curse of Vaśiṣtha making the followers of *Ugratārā*, *mlecchas*, as given in the *Kālikā Purāṇa* (81/22). The *Yoginī Tantra* (I/12) describes the story in a slightly different manner. Śālastambha's origin and connection with the former ruling dynasty is also proved by a number of epigraphs. The Paśupati epigraph of the Nepal king Jayadeva II mentions Rājyamatī, the daughter of Harṣadeva, who was a successor of Śālastambha as "*Bhagadattarāja kulajā*" (born in the family of Bhagadatta).[29] Prālambha or Sālambha, Harjjara, Vanamāla and Balavarman trace their origin from the same *Bhauma* family, though belonging to the line of Śālastambha.[30]

It is suspected that Prālambha (Sālambha) and Harjjara are '*mleccha*' names, and the suspicion regarding their ancestry is belived to have been

26. *E.H.K.*, p. 107.
27. *I.H.Q.*, III, p. 845.
28. *Outline of the Ancient History and Civilisation of India*, p. 348; also K. Datta (*J.A.R.S.*, XII, pp. 41-50) who supports the non-Aryan *mleccha* origin of Śālastambha.
29. *I.A.*, IX, pp. 175f.
30. Tezpur grant of Vanamāla; Parbatīyā plates of Vanamāla, V 7f.; Nowgong grant of Balavarman, V 9f.

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strengthened by the fact that in Tezpur grant, Prālambha's name is described as something strange: (*Prālambha ityadbhūta-nāmadheyaḥ*).[31] On the basis of this and other references, Gait and other writers take these rulers as Mongolians or aborigines and hold that they were later on, "fitted out with a noble ancestry." [32] But the actual interpretation of the verse in question will not guarantee such a conviction. Prālambha was so called because he was a mighty king and a destroyer of all enemies. The verse states thus: In his family (Bhagadatta-Vajradatta) was born one whose foot-stool was shining with the lustre of jewels on the heads of kings, who was the lord of Prāgjyotiṣa, who destroyed the enemy heroes and who bore the strange name Prālambha.[33] There is nothing, therefore, to suggest here that Prālambha and his family had a '*mleccha*' origin. It is probable, however, that the name Harjjara may be derived from Austric formations, the word '*hara*' in the same language meaning a hill.[34] But, can it be proved that he was racially also such ? Moreover, the non-Aryan origin or sound of the name of a particular king has, in our opinion, very little to do with the determination of the racial origin of a royal dynasty. It is, therefore, wrong when H.C. Ray asserts that both the families of Śālastambha and Brahmapāla "belonged to non-Aryan stock as the sound of the name Harjjara is distinctly non-Hindu.—They were right, however, in tracing their descent from Bhagadatta, the lord of the *mlecchas*, *Cīnas* and *Kirātas*, in as much as they appear to have belonged to that great line of Mongolian people.—The Mongolian physiognomy of the people of Assam and some of the districts of northern and eastern Bengal shows the substantial accuracy of this conclusion".[35] Here, as elsewhere, his contention is perhaps based on the misinterpretation of the sources. It is wrong to hold that all the rulers of ancient Assam were Mongolians. The Mongolian physiognomy of the people—and all of them do not have it—gives little indication that the ruling families had the same racial origin. The immediate successors of Śālastambha were Vijaya, Pālaka, Kumāra, Vajradeva, Harṣadeva, Balavarman II and those of Prālambha and Harjjara were Vanamāla, Jaymāla, Balavarman III and others; but none of these names betrays a non-Aryan origin. All these kings trace their origin from Bhagadatta and are connected with the Pāla line, as is shown by the grants of the Pālas.

31. In the Parbatīyā plates of Vanamāla, the text is read as; "*Sālambha ity-uddhata nāmadheyaḥ*" (*V* 7), giving a slightly different meaning: (see *E.I.*, XXIX, p. 157).
32. *History of Assam*, p. 31; also H.C. Ray, *D.H.N.I.*, I, p. 242.
33. Tezpur plates of Vanamāla, 7.
34. B.K. Kākati, *App. to Cultural History of Assam*, I, pp. 222f.
35. *D.H.N.I.* I, pp. 248-49.

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The Bargāon grant of Ratnapāla seems to have mentioned Śālastambha as a *Mlecchādhinātha* largely with a view to extolling the Pāla family, which, however, also traces its descent from the same *Bhauma* dynasty. So epigraphy seems to confirm our view that Śālastambha and the Pālas belonged to the same family as the Varmans. Whatever the origin of the *Bhaumas*, the fact that they are associated with the introduction of Aryan culture, only proves that Assam must have come under Aryan influence long before the rise of the Varmans; but , as we have tried to show, the Narakas were Alpine chiefs, neither Mongolians, nor *mlecchas*, nor aborigines. They were designated as such because of the adoption of Buddhism. Śālastambha, alias Devavarman or Mādhava, came from the *Nālandā* region, where Bhāskara had probably established him as a ruler, and, immediately after Bhāskara's death, without leaving any son, he came to Prāgjyotiṣa and declared himself as king. It is also possible that he belonged to a collateral branch of the family of Bhāskara. But how are we to connect Śālastambha with Avantivarman ?

The name Śālastambha appears to be a *biruda;* because in the Nowgong grant, Vīrabāhu or Jayamāla is called *Raṇastambha*,[36] and in the Guākuchi grant of Indrapāla, *Saṁgrāmastambha* is given as one of the thirtytwo *birudas* of that king. Vijaya is called Vigrahastambha. So, it appears likely that Śālastambha had another name with the surname 'Varmādeva'. If Devavarmā of the Chinese records was only a surname with its components reversed, we may identify him (with the surname 'Varmādeva') as Avantivarman of the *Mūdrārākṣasa*.

Now the question to be decided is, how to reconcile the two seemingly contradictory statements in the Bargāon grant and in the work of Viśākhadatta and to make the identification rest on a historical reality. The reference in the grant in question is misleading and confused, but it is very significant that Śālastambha is said to have occupied the throne 'owing to a turn of adverse fate': (*vidhicalanavaśādeva jagrāha rājyaṁ*), indicating that Śālastambha was not the rightful heir to the throne. The fact that he came from outside, was not directly connected with Bhāskara, and was a Buddhist from the Nālandā region, must have led the scribe to make him a *mleccha*. It was an instance of usurpation in the sense that Bhāskara left no heir of his own, nor does it appear that he selected Śālastambha to succeed him. It is likely that immediately after Bhāskara's death there was a temporary period of disorder, when Devavarman alias Avantivarman seated himself on the throne, having assumed the high sounding title of Śālastambha. If this assumption is correct, the identification becomes

36. *J.A.S.B.*, LXVI, I, pp. 297f.

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almost certain, and the theory of a gap between Bhāskara and Śālastambha is no longer tenable. It was, therefore, immediately after Bhāskara that Avantivarman or Śālastambha ascended the throne in about A.D. 650-51, but not in 655 or 660, as held by K.L. Barua,[37] on the supposition of a gap between them, in which Avantivarman ruled until he was dethroned by Śālastambha. That Śālastambha's accession cannot be placed much later than A.D. 650 , is borne out by the fact that Devavarman (Śālastambha) was the contemporary of Ādityasena and I-Tsing. Moreover, the Tezpur Rock epigraph of Harjjara is recorded in A.D. 829-30, and Harjjara is eleventh or twelfth in descent from Śālastambha, including probably two unknown rulers after Balavarman II. Even Śālastambha's date of accession in A.D. 650 appears to involve unusually short generations. So, on these considerations, we conclude that there was no gap between Bhāskara and Śālastambha, who was the same person as Avantivarman.[38]

The line of Śālastambha with twentyone rulers may be placed between A.D. 650-990. Though the length of the period seems shorter, this chronology may be taken as a working hypothesis in view of the fact that most of the rulers were of minor importance. If this chronology be accepted, Śālastambha may reasonably be placed between A.D. 650-75.

Śālastambha carried on the old policy of the extension of the frontiers of Kāmarūpa in the west. We have already seen that the possessions of Bhāskara in the *Nālandā* region were inherited by him. A new power, however, rose in Magadha about this time in Ādityasena of the Later Guptas, who gave a good account of himself by reviving to some extent the lost glory of his family. According to the Shāhpur epigraph he was ruling in (H.E. 66)=A.D. 672, and he assumed the high sounding title of *Mahārājādhirāja Paramabhaṭṭāraka*.[39] The Vaidyanāth inscription describes him as "the ruler of the (whole) earth up to the shores of the ocean, the performer of the *Aśvamedha* and other great sacrifices".[40] In one record from Nepal, he is called the "great Ādityasena, the illustrious lord of Magadha."[41] His exploits are also mentioned in the Aphsad inscription.[42] On the basis of these statements, it is held that Devavarman or his successor could not retain "his lordship over the

37. *E.H.K.*, p. 106; *J.A.R.S.*, I, pp. 97-103; *J.A.R.S.*, VI, pp. 12-18.
38. See P.C. Choudhury, '*A Historical Note on Avantivarman, referred to as a Kāmarūpa King*', *The Cottonian*, Cotton College, Gauhati, April, 1948, pp. 36-39.
39. Fleet, *C.I.I.*, III (No. 43), p. 212.
40. *Ibid*, p. 213 (Note).
41. *I.A.*, IX, p. 151.
42. *C.I.I.*, III, pp. 200f.

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Nālandā region and had to lose it to his mighty neighbour, Ādityasena in or before 672-73 A.D."[43] It is further supposed that he or his successor had by then lost hold over *Karṇasuvarṇa* as well. H.C. Raychaudhuri thinks that these later Guptas are referred to as lords of the whole of *Uttarāpatha* (Northern India).[44] R.G. Basak contends that "Bengal, specially the Southern *Rāḍhā* and *Vaṅga*" might have formed part of the kingdom of Ādityasena.[45] But, the inscriptions in their most part have described the exploits of this later Gupta ruler in a conventional style,[46] nor can we infer the supremacy of the later Guptas in Bengal from the hypothetical epithet that they were the lords of *Uttarāpatha*.[47] The accounts of I-Tsing (672-73) leave us no doubt regarding the occupation of the *Nālandā* region by Devavarman alias Śālastambha. There are other genuine data on record to show that his successors, particularly Harṣadeva could retain their hold not only over North Bengal but also in the west as far as Magadha. It appears certain, therefore, that Avantivarman or Śālastambha retained the eastern part of Magadha, with perhaps the whole of Northern Bengal including Sylhet and some portions of South-east Bengal, and hence could be the patron of Viśākhadatta, We have also reasons to believe that the latter's play was written somewhere in the western part of Kāmarūpa. Indeed, he may have been a *paṇḍita* from Kāmarūpa itself.[48]

In fact, Śālastambha, the founder of a new line of kings, but related to the former ruling family, carried on the traditional policy of the kingdom and perhaps justified the expectation of the author of the *Mūdrārākṣasa* and the writer of the Bargāon grant in establishing order in Kāmarūpa and making his influence felt in distant lands.

2. Vijaya or Vigrahastambha and his Successors : Period of Kumāra:

The successors of Śālastambha except perhaps Kumāra are mere names. The Hayuṅthāl grant (v. 4) simply states that on the death of Śālastambha, his brave son Vijaya, the vanquisher of enemies, became the mighty lord of the earth. The grants of Balavarman III make only a passing reference to him. The Bargāon grant of Ratna-

43. N.N. Dasgupta, *I.C.*, II, pp. 37f.
44. *P.H.A.I.*, pp. 516-17.
45. *H.N.E.I.*, p. 128.
46. It is almost certain, however, that he held sway over Aphsad (Gayā), Shāhpur (Patna) and the Mandara (Bhagalpur), or great portions of Magadha and Aṅga.
47. R.C. Majumdar, *History of Bengal*, I, pp. 81-82 and (f.n.).
48. J.C. Ghosh, *J.P.A.S.B.*, XXVI (N.S.), p. 244.

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Pāla (v. 9) calls him Vigrahastambha. According to the Hayuṅthāl grant, Vijaya was followed in succession by Pālaka, Kumāra and Vajradeva.[49] Nothing important is recorded of their reigns, and in view of this, they may be placed during the short period of A. D. 675-725. Of them, however, Kumāra was a mighty king. The name also occurs in an inscription, inscribed in two lines on a big copper bell, found along with a number of icons and other articles on a hillock at Narakāsuragāon. The script seems to be a mixture of North Indian *Brāhmī*, certain letters having affinities with *Devanāgarī* and even with old Assamese. Most letters have similarities with those of Hayuṅthāl Grant of Harjjaravarman, and the rest with those of his successors. The writing is as follows :

Śrīkumāra-Devarājeva sa-yātmanā Devāsurarāja (*Devayuvarāja*) *hastyantaka-daghyakābhūttacya pūjā iyaṁ* (*iba*) *tena* (*yena*) *devatakāryyādikāntaiṣā ghaṇṭakā datta*.......

(Śrī Kumāra who was like *Indra* and was the killer of the elephants belonging to the king of *Devas* and *Asuras*, meaning *Indra* again or kings and princes, was or became the protector of this worship of his i.e. *Indra*. This bell was given by him (Kumāra) for use in the worship of the deities).

The writing is undated and it does not contain the name of the donee. Palaeographically, the writing may be placed during the 8th century A. D. This Kumāra was, therefore, no other than the king of the same name, mentioned in the inscription of Harjjara. It was this king who was as powerful as the king of the *Devas*, who built a temple, dedicated to the said deities or introduced their worship centering round *Indra* in a temple or temples that were long existent. This confirms the observation made by Yuan Chwang who noticed hundreds of *Deva* temples in the kingdom of Bhāskaravarman.[49a]

It is likely that shortly after Kumāra's reign the hold of Kāmarūpa over *Puṇḍravardhana* and on the further west was lost at this time. For it is given in the Ragholi plates of Jayavardhana, a ruler of the Śaila dynasty that the brother of his grand father defeated the king of *Puṇḍra* and conquered his dominion.[50] This conquest probably took place round about A. D. 725.[51] But unfortunately, no details of their rule in North Bengal or over parts of *Puṇḍravardhana* are recorded.

49. Hayuṅthāl grant, VV 4-5.
49a. See P.C. Choudhury, *J.A.R.S.*, XVI, pp. 57-59.
50. *E.I.*, IX, p. 41.
51. H. C. Ray, *D.H.N.I.*,I,p. 276.

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3. Harṣadeva (Harṣavarman) or Śrī Harṣa—a great conqueror:

With Śrī Harṣa or Harṣadeva's accession, Kāmarūpa entered into a new chapter of her activities, and his period witnessed remarkable achievements in the history of the land. D. R. Bhandarkar's identification of this prince with the grandson of Bhāskaravarman,[52] is hardly correct. As stated in the Hayuṅthāl grant (v. 6), after them (Vijaya, Pālaka, Kumāra, Vajradeva) the prince , who was well-known as Harṣavarmā, became a great king of merit and of piety, who protected his subjects as his own children and never ill-treated them. In the inscriptions of Vanamāla, he is called Śrī Harṣa. His eventful reign may be placed between A. D. 725-50.

The Paśupati epigraph of the Nepal king Jayadeva II mentions one Śrī Harṣadeva, who is described as the conqueror of *Gauḍa, Oḍra, Kaliṅga, Kośala* and other lands. It states thus: "The king (Jayadeva II) wedded, as if she were Fortune, queen Rājyamatī, possessed of virtues, befitting her race, the noble descendant of Bhagadatta's royal line: (*Bhagadattarāja-kulajā*) and daughter of Śrī Harṣadeva, lord of *Gauḍa, Oḍra, Kaliṅga, Kośala* and other lands, who crushed the heads of hostile kings with the club-like tusks of his rutting elephants".[53]

The text of the epigraph shows that Harṣadeva of the family of Bhagadatta was connected with the royal house of Nepal by a marriage alliance. But the identification of Harṣadeva is disputed. In the opinion of B. Chakravarti, Rājyamatī was not the daughter of the Kāmarūpa king Harṣadeva, and the king mentioned in the epigraph was an Orissa ruler, as descent from Bhagadatta is also claimed by the Bhaumakaras of Orissa. Though Harṣadeva is mentioned as the lord of *Gauḍa, Oḍra*, etc., there is no specific mention of the king , he asserts, as the king of Kāmarūpa.[54] He further contends that the absence "of the name of Kāmarūpa has its significance. Harṣadeva was of the royal line of Bhagadatta, but could not perhaps claim the sovereignty of Prāgjyotiṣa".[55] The identification of Harṣadeva with a little known ruler of Orissa is not supported by any genuine source. The mere omission of the name of Kāma-

52. *App. to E.I.*, XIX-XXIII, pp. 279f; H.C. Ray seems to identify him with Harjjara (*D.H.N.I.*, p. 192).
53. *I.A.*, IX, pp. 178f; *Fleet, C.I.I.*, III, Intro., pp. 178f.
54. *E.I.*, XIV, pp. 1-6; *J.B.O.R.S.*, XIV, p. 293.
55. *I.H.Q.*, XIV, pp. 841-843.

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rūpa cannot be held as a serious argument in favour of the identification of the king as an Orissa ruler. The presence of the *Bhaumakaras* of Orissa, as we shall show, seems to suggest that they were established either by Harṣadeva himself or by his predecessor. As R. P. Chanda has shown, the ruler, who after the conquest of Orissa established a relation of his, named Kṣemaṅkaradeva there, was not Harṣapāla of Gauḍa as surmised by D. N. Mukherjee,[56] but Harṣadeva of Kāmarūpa.[57] This is also based on the fact that he and his successors claim descent from Bhagadatta.[58] B. Miśra, however, disputes the connection between the *Bhaumas* of Orissa and Kāmarūpa.[59] R. C. Majumdar, on the basis of the *Bhaumas* of Orissa, tracing their origin from Naraka-Bhagadatta, contends that both Rājyamatī and Harṣadeva might have belonged to Orissa. He does not find "any king of Kāmarūpa named Harṣa who may be credited with such brilliant conquests".[60] But, as we have indicated, the possible connection between the *Bhaumas* of Kāmarūpa and those of Orissa may have been due to the fact that the latter were established by the rulers of Kāmarūpa. As suggested by R. P. Chanda,[61] the Mahāyāna remains of the Cuttack hills may be attributed to a line of Buddhist rulers who ruled over *Uṭkala* during the 8th century A. D. and traced their descent from Naraka *Bhauma*. It is likely that they were related to Harṣadeva of Kāmarūpa, and Kṣemendra, or his father was placed on the throne by the former after his conquests.[62] The epigraphs[63] of the family show that they were ruling roughly between A. D. 700-900, and it is possible that after Harṣadeva's death, Kṣemendra, the first important ruler, declared his independence. So the theory of Harṣa being a ruler of Orissa can easily be discarded. Kielhorn rightly points out that he "was almost certainly a king of Prāgjyotiṣa. In fact, he was probably the Harişa (or Harṣa) of the Tezpur grant, who would thus be placed in the first half of the eighth century A. D.".[64] The same view is held by S. K. Aiyangar,[65] R. D. Banerji[66] and others.[67]

56. *I.C.*, V, pp. 371-72.
57. *Pravāsī* (N.1), XXXII.
58. R.D. Banerji, *History of Orissa*, I, p. 159; S. Levi, *E.I.*, XV, pp. 363-64.
59. *I.H.Q.*, XIV, p. 841; *Orissa under the Bhauma Kings*, pp. 80-83; also H.K. Mahtab, *The History of Orissa*, pp. 50f.
60. *Bhāratīya Vidyā*, VI, pp. 111-112; *History of Bengal*, I, pp. 85f.
61. *Art in Orissa*, *J.R.S.*, *Arts.*, Aug. 1930.
62. K.L. Barua, *J.A.R.S.*, II, p. 106.
63. Lévi, *E.I.*, XV, pp. 363-64.
64. *J.R.A.S.*, 1898, pp. 384-85.
65. *J.I.H.*, V, p. 326.
66. *M.A.S.B.*, V. pp. 43f.
67. P.L. Paul, *Early History of Bengal*, pp. 29-32.

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The identification of Harṣadeva with the Kāmarūpa ruler is also based on the date of the Paśupati inscription, which is recorded in 153 of a certain era. It is neither a Śaka era, as held by D.N. Mukherjee,[68] nor a Harṣa era, as suggested by Bhagavanlal Indraji,[69] but, as shown by S. Levi, may be a Tibetan era, 11 years earlier than the Harṣa era, which corresponds to (153+595)=A. D. 748.[70] It is also not improbable that the date 153 was inserted in Kāmarūpa era, started by Bhāskaravarman in about A.D. 594-95. This date tallies with the system of chronology for Harṣadeva of Kāmarūpa, whom we have placed between A.D. 725-50.

When and how Harṣadeva could make such a vast conquest is not definitely known; but it is certain that the conquests were made before the date of the Paśupati epigraph(748). It is also likely that the conquests were not permanent. It is, however, difficult to believe that the statement in the inscription is purely an instance of poetic exaggeration.[71] P. Bhattacharya contends that Harṣadeva might have established his sphere of influence over *Gauḍa*, *Oḍra*, *Kaliṅga*, *Kośala* and other lands only temporarily.[72] In the opinion of D.R. Bhandarker, the *Gauḍavaho* and the Gaṅga inscription, issued from Kaliṅga in the middle of the 8th century A.D., show that Harṣa had no such control over these regions. "Nominal allegiance", adds Bhandarkar, "to him for a time only has been shown—severally by these rulers".[73] But, we have seen that Bhāskara and his successor almost certainly extended their sway to *Nālandā*. Historical evidence seems to support the view that the hold of Kāmarūpa over North Bengal was not lost during their time; it is no doubt true that under the weak successors of Śālastambha, there was a period of decline of the Kāmarūpa power in the west. But, soon it was revived by Harṣadeva, who made a new bid for supremacy by conquering new regions. As rightly observed by N.N. Das Gupta, "we must admit that the statement in the Paśupati inscription about the lordship of Śrī Harṣa over Gauḍa and the Southern provinces is not an instance of poetical exaggeration by his son-in-law's panegyrist".[74] Some portions of Bengal were under Kāmarūpa

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68. *I.C.*, V, pp. 371f.
69. *I.A.*, IX, pp. 178f; *I.A.*, XIII, pp. 411-28.
70. See Fleet, *C.I.I.*, Intro. pp. 178f; *I.A.*, XIV, pp. 346f; also Jayaswal, *J.B.O.R.S.*, XXII, pp. 164f, 184.
71. Gait, *History of Assam*, pp. 30-31; J. Monahan, *Bengal, Past and Present*, 1910, pp. 62-63.
72. *K.S.*, Intro., p. 23.
73. *I.C.*, I, pp. 136-37.
74. *I.C.*, II, pp. 44-45.

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from the time of Bhāskara to the time of Harṣadeva,[75] and it is almost certain that till A. D. 748 its hold over the regions was not lost. The latter held Bengal for a long time to enable him to pass through that country in his conquest of *Oḍra*, *Kaliṅga*, *Kośala* and other lands.[76] "It is not at all improbable that about 80 or 90 years after his (Bhāskara's) death, the territories acquired by him having been thoroughly consolidated by his successors, Śrī Harṣadeva was powerful enough to conquer new territories towards the south and the west, in which two directions only the kingdom was capable of extension".[77] If the claim of conquest, though temporarily made, has any historical basis, Kāmarūpa, at least for the time being, reached the highest point of its glory during the middle of the 8th century A. D., and it included lands from Sadiyā in the east to Ayodhyā in the west , and from the Himalayas in the north as far as the Bay of Bengal and Orissa in the south-west. It included, therefore, Assam, Gauḍa, a great part of Orissa, portions of Magadha and a northern part of Madras State, including South Kośala. This conquest must have been completed before Yaśovarman's invasion of Gauḍa and Magadha.

The rise of Kāmarūpa might have led other powers in India to raise their heads against Harṣadeva. N. N. Vasu contends that Harṣadeva first defeated one Pracaṇḍadeva of the Śaila dynasty and then wrested from him Kaliṅga and Kośala; he further believes, on the basis of a tradition, that Ādiśūra conquered Kāmarūpa about A. D. 732 after killing Harṣadeva.[78] But it is chronologically impossible to ascribe the conquest of Kāmarūpa by a traditional ruler to that date. B. C. Sen holds that Harṣadeva possibly defeated Ādityasena's grand-son, Viṣṇugupta;[79] but the system of chronology of the later Guptas is uncertain, and it was probably Jīvitagupta II, who was defeated by Harṣadeva. The three successors of Ādityasena: Devagupta, Viṣṇu-gupta and Jīvitagupta II are placed towards the latter half of the 7th and the beginning of the 8th century A. D., and they were ruling over parts of Magadha. It is doubtful that they extended their sway over other regions, including Bengal.[80] The Deo-Baranark epigraph of

75. P.L. Paul, *Early History of Bengal*, pp. 29-32.
76. R.D. Banerji, *M.A.S.B.*, V, pp. 43f.
77. *E.H.K.*, p. 113.
78. *Social History of Kāmarūpa*, 1, p. 157.
79. *Some Historical Aspects of the Ins. of Bengal*, etc., p. 278.
80. R.C. Majumdar, *History of Bengal*, I, p. 81.

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Jīvitagupta[81] indicates that he was less powerful than Ādityasena. It is probable, therefore, that Jīvita was defeated by Harṣa before he could consolidate his hold over Magadha. Harṣadeva's contest with the Western Chālukyas is hinted at the Samangaḍ epigraph of Rāṣṭrakūṭa Dantidurga (S. E. 674=A. D. 752).[82] D. N. Mukherjee holds that Harṣadeva was defeated by the Karṇāṭaka army of Vikramāditya II Chālukya in A. D. 735, [83] but his chronology is not supported by any source. The epigraph states that Dantidurga "quickly overcame the boundless army of the Karṇāṭaka (i. e., army of Kīrtivarman II, the Western Chālukya prince) which had been expert in defeating the lord of Kāñci, the king of *Kerala*, the *Cholas*, the *Pāṇḍyas*, *Śrī Harṣa* and *Vajrata*".[84] Fleet's identification of Śrī Harṣa with Harṣa of Kanauj,[85] is chronologically impossible. N. N. Das Gupta rightly points out that as "Śrī Harṣa of Kāmarūpa was a contemporary of Kīrtivarman, the conclusion is irresistible that it was he who, as the lord of *Oḍra*, *Kaliṅga* and *Kośala*, is alluded to in the Samangaḍ inscription as to have been worsted (evidently somewhere in the south) by the army of Kīrtivarman".[86] He was undoubtedly the same ruler as Harṣadeva of the Paśupati epigraph, and was probably defeated some time before A. D. 748, when he invaded the south and had to return back. The event may have occurred just before the date of the Paśupati epigraph. There is no evidence that it led to the invasion of Harṣa's kingdom.

At the heals of this contest came a greater danger from the west. The most important ruler of Kanauj after Harṣavardhana was Yaśovarman, whose exploits form the subject of a contemporary work, *Gauḍavaho* of Vākpati, and who was the contemporary of Lalitāditya of Kāśmīra. Though the work contains 'as little history as possible' [87] the central theme of the killing of the lord of Gauḍa and Magadha by Yaśovarman is, however, important. The rise of this king is also proved by one inscription at *Nālandā*. But the identification of Yaśovarmādeva of the epigraph is disputed. H. N. Śāstrī[88] holds that he was Yaśodharman of Mandaśor epigraph, the contemporary of Balāditya

81. *C.I.I.*, III, pp. 216, 218.
82. *I.A.*, 1882, p. 114.
83. *I.C.*, V, p. 372.
84. *I. A.*, 1882, p. 114.
85. *Ibid.* (f.n.).
86. *I.C.*, II, pp. 44-45.
87. A.B. Keith, *History of Sanskrit Literature*, p. 150.
88. *E.I.*, XX, pp. 37f.

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of A. D. 530; this is also the opinion of Fleet[89] and A. K. Mrithunjayam.[90] But the name is distinctly written as Yaśovarmādeva; so he can hardly be identified with Yaśodharman of Mālwa of two centuries earlier. He was no other than the ruler of Kanauj, Yaśovarman, mentioned in the *Gauḍavaho* and *Rājataraṅgiṇī*.[91]

It is unfortunate that Vākpati does not mention the name of the Gauḍa ruler, said to have been killed by Yaśovarman. In couplet 354 there is a brief reference to the lord of Gauḍa who fled through fear, and in 415 it is stated that "the multitude of the (allied) kings of the lord of Magadha, who gave himself up to flight, having returned at once, appeared like the sparks of fire (issuing from) a shooting star and raining in the opposite direction." In couplets 417 the slaying of the ruler is mentioned thus : "the king (Yaśovarman) having slain the king of the *Magadhas*, who was fleeing, proceeded to those woods on the sea-shore which were perfumed by the cardamon."[92] It is yet to be proved that the poet's patron undertook all the expeditions in the manner of the exploits of a traditional Vikramāditya. There are writers, like V. Smith, who believe in the historical character of the testimony;[93] but epigraphic corroboration is lacking here. But then, who was the Gauḍa ruler killed by Yaśovarman? The system of chronology so far accepted for Yaśovarman, based primarily on Kalhaṇa, appears to be defective. His contemporary king Lalitāditya is mentioned in the Annals of the T'ang dynasty as *Mutopi*, who is said to have sent to China an embassy during Hiuen Tsung's reign (A. D. 713-755). Yaśovarman, known as *I-cha-fu-mo* in Chinese records, is also said to have sent an embassy to China in A. D. 731. Kalhaṇa, who describes the exploits of the former, also mentions the defeat of Yaśovarman in the hands of Lalitāditya and incidentally refers to the killing of the lord of Gauḍa by Yaśovarman. Stein places the overthrow of Yaśovarman after A. D. 736, after which Lalitāditya is said to have performed his *digvijaya*.[94] Kalhaṇa, writing on the exploits of the Kāśmīra king, states that he approached the town of Prāgjyotiṣa and saw the smoke of black aloe wood burning in the forest.[95] The same work tells a story of the murder

89. *C.I.I.*, III, p. 145 (f.n. 2); *A.S.I.*, 1925-26, pp. 131, 158.
90. *I.H.Q.*, VIII, pp. 228-30; *Ibid*, pp. 615-17.
91. R.C. Majumdar, *I.H.Q.*, VII, p. 664; *Ibid*, VIII, pp. 371-73.
92. *Gauḍavaho* (ed. S.P. Pandit and N.B. Utgikar.)
93. *J.R.A.S.*, 1908, II, pp. 765-93.
94. Kalhaṇa's *Rājataraṅgiṇī*, I, pp. 88f.
95. *Rājataraṅgiṇī*, Bk. IV, S. 171.

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of a Gauḍa prince by Lalitāditya on the bank of the Bias.[96] Smith contends that probably Lalitāditya's guest was the heir of the ruler slain by Yaśovarman, and came to Kāśmīra in order to ask aid for the recovery of his father's throne, usurped by Gopāla. Lalitāditya may have killed the heir, Smith opines, with the idea of the conquest of Gauḍa.[97]

It is yet to be shown that Lalitāditya undertook such an expedition to the eastern ocean. Smith places Yaśovarman between A. D. 725-731 and Lalitāditya's accession at about A. D. 724. The overthrow of Yaśovarman, in his opinion, took place between A. D. 740-45, and the exploits of Yaśovarman before his contest with Lalitāditya, about A. D. 730.[98] But, as we have noted, Kalhaṇa's system of chronology is defective. It is possible to place Yaśovarman and Lalitāditya about A. D. 725-55 in view of their sending of missions to the Chinese emperor who flourished between A. D. 713-755. This system of chronology also rests on the identification of the Gauḍa ruler, defeated or killed by Yaśovarman.

In the opinion of R. C. Majumdar, the king of Vaṅga opposing Yaśovarman was a Khaḍga ruler.[99] It is unlikely that the Khaḍgas could exert their influence over a large area and for a considerable period of time; it is equally improbable that the conqueror marched against a little known Khaḍga ruler, whose kingdom hardly extended beyond Eastern Bengal. R. D. Banerji identifies the Gauḍa and Magadhan ruler with Jīvitagupta II.[100] Yaśovarman's invasion was followed, according to him, by another invasion led by Harṣadeva. "Most probably", Banerji writes, "this invasion from Assam followed upon the heels of that from Kanauj, or we may one day be surprised to learn that both armies invaded Bengal jointly".[101] This identification is also supported by other writers.[102] But there is no evidence to prove that Jīvitagupta II held sway over Bengal or Gauḍa.[103] R. D. Banerji himself admits that *Gauḍa*, *Oḍra*, *Kaliṅga*, etc., were under Harṣadeva, who ruled over

96. *Ibid*, IV, ?23-35.
97. *J.R.A.S.*, 1908, II, pp. 765f.
98. *Ibid*, pp. 765-93.
99. *History of Bengal*, I, pp. 82-89.
100. Also B.C. Sen, *Some Historical Aspects*,, etc., p. 281; R.G. Basak, *H.N.E.I.* pp. 130-31.
101. *M.A.S.B.*, V, pp. 43f; *Bāṅglāra Itihāsa*, I, pp. 104-5.
102. See *History of Kanauj*, p. 198.
103. R.C. Majumdar, *History of Bengal*, I, pp. 81-82.

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Gauḍa for a long time before A.D. 748. He further adds that during the first quarter of the 8th century A.D., these regions were under Kāmarūpa, and about that time Yaśovarman attempted to conquer the whole of Northern India.[104] But, we have tried to show that Gauḍa was under Bhāskaravarman, and that after his time, it either remained under Kāmarūpa until the time of Harṣadeva, or the latter reacquired it from the hands of some petty ruler, after a temporary loss during the reigns of the weak successors of Śālastambha. Banerji's argument seems to have been based on the idea that Bengal was only temporarily occupied by Bhāskara after Harṣa's death and either Mādhavagupta or Ādityasena took possession of it, either from Bhāskara or his successor,[105] which is unlikely.

We have shown that Ādityasena's contemporary Śālastambha extended his sway even upto the *Nālandā* region. Harṣadeva may have made Bengal the base of his operations to conquer Orissa and other lands. The successors of Ādityasena, who have been placed during the last quarter of the 7th and the first quarter of the 8th century A.D., did not probably hold sway over Bengal.[106] Before Yaśovarman launched his campaigns, Harṣadeva took his chance to extend the bounds of Kāmarūpa in the west and the south-west, and it is more likely that the invasion of Yaśovarman was against Harśadeva rather than against a petty ruler of Bengal or Jīvitagupta II, who may have already been defeated by the Kāmarūpa ruler by A.D. 725-30.

It is also chronologically impossible that Gopāla or his successor was overthrown either by Harṣadeva or Yaśovarman. V. Smith places Gopāla about A.D. 730-40;[107] R.D. Banerji between 730-69;[108] B.C. Sen between 750-75;[109] S.K. Aiyangar places Dharmapāla's accession in 795.[110] R.C. Majumdar, critically examining the dates of Smith, Chanda, and Basak, takes the Sārnāth epigarph of Mahīpāla I (1026)[111] as the fixed point and places Gopāla's accession at A.D. 770;[112] D.C. Bhatta-

104. *Bāṅglāra Itihāsa*, I, pp. 104-5.
105. *Ibid*, p. 95.
106. R.C. Majumdar, *History of Bengal*, I, p. 81. Ādityasena's activities may have been confined to South Bihar, Chotanagpur and Orissa, but he could not evidently hold Bengal proper.
107. *Early History of India*, pp. 366f.
108. *J.B.O.R.S.*, 1928, pp. 489f.
109. *Some Historical Aspects of the Inscriptions of Bengal*, pp. 317-18.
110. *J.R.A.S.*, (Bombay), N.S., III, pp. 124-25.
111. *I.A.*, XIV, p. 140; *J.A.S.B.*, 1906, p. 445.
112. *J.P.A.S.B.*, (N.S.) , 1921, pp. 1-6.

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charya before A.D. 788, the date of Dharmapāla's accession;[113] but on a revision, he places Gopāla between 700-744.[114] Banerji also revised his earlier chronology and placed Gopāla's accession in 750-[115] The most likely date of the rise of Gopāla appears to be after A.D. 750 or after the defeat and the murder of the Gauḍa ruler by Yaśovarman, when anarchy became rampant in Bengal.[116] During this period various rulers of India overran Bengal. It is almost certain, therefore, that the Gauḍa ruler, defeated by Yaśovarman sometime between 748-50, was Harṣadeva, and the overthrow of the former by Lalitāditya cannot be placed before A.D. 750. It is, however, not known whether Lalitāditya also took possession of Bengal, nor is it definitely known who was the Gauḍa ruler killed by him. This succession of events appears to be supported by the date of the Paśupati epigraph (748), referring to the exploits of Harṣa. If this chronology is feasible, the identification of the Gauḍa ruler becomes almost certain. The *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* mentions a ruler with the name *Śrī:* (*Śrīnāma-mahīpati*) before Gopāla and after *Somākhya* (Śaśāṅka) in Gauḍa, and it is possible to identify him with Śrī Harṣadeva of Kāmarūpa and lord of Gauḍa.

S.K. Aiyangar's contention that Harṣadeva, the lord of *Gauḍa, Oḍra* and other lands, as mentioned in the Paśupati epigraph, was the king, defeated by Yaśovarman,[117] may be taken as correct. This agrees with the accounts given in the Assamese chronicles of a war between Vikramāditya and Subāhu, which may be identical with that between Yaśovarman and Harṣadeva.[118] All these informations strongly support the view that the defeat of Harṣadeva took place soon after A.D. 748, by which date he had completed his conquests and was the ruler of Gauḍa and Magadha. If Kalhaṇa is right in attributing to Lalitāditya the murder of another Gauḍa ruler or prince in his kingdom, it may be held that Yaśovarman did not kill Harṣadeva, but took him as a prisoner to Kanauj, and, after Yaśovarman's defeat in the hands of Lalitāditya, the Gauḍa ruler fell into the hands of the latter and was killed by him. The story of a second ruler or heir to the Gauḍa throne being murdered by the king of Kāśmīra may probably be reconciled on the basis of such an assumption. The *Gauḍavaho* also seems to point to such a conclusion.

113. *I.A.*, 1920, pp. 189-93.
114. *I.H.Q.*, III, pp. 571-91; *Ibid*, VI, pp. 153-68.
115. *M.A.S.B.*, V, pp. 43-113.
116. *I.H.Q.*, VI, p. 443.
117. *J.I.H.*, 1926, p. 327.
118. See S.K. Bhuyan, *I.H.Q.*, V, p. 464.

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While Bengal was overwhelmed by the anarchy that followed the death of Harṣadeva, Kāmarūpa proper to the east of Puṇḍra seems to have been little affected by the invasions from the west and the south. When Bengal was overrun by these repeated invasions and anarchy became intolerable, Gopāla was chosen king.[119] But the removal of a strong hand from Kāmarūpa, and the loss of her possessions in Bengal and other regions greatly impaired the prestige of the kingdom, so carefully built up by the toils of Bhūtivarman and his successors. The weakness of the kingdom continued until the time of Prālambha.

4. Balavarman (II) and his Successors :

It is presumed that the family of Śālastambha ended with the death of Śrī Harṣa or Harṣadeva;[120] but this was not actually so. The Hayuṅthāl grant of Harjjara distinctly states (v 7) that Harṣavarmā having died, his son Balavarman became a powerful king and he too succumbed to death. We refer to this king as Balavarman II, as there was another king of the same name in the family of the Varmans. In other inscriptions of the line, his name is found omitted, and in view of his comparatively uneventful reign, he may approximately be placed between A.D. 750-765. It was probably during this time that Gopāla of Gauḍa rose to power and consolidated his position there.[121]

The period after Balavarman is obscure; the records of the family do not give a continuous genealogy, nor do they throw light on his immediate successor. The grants of Vanamāla seem to indicate that Prālambha or Sālambha became king after the death of the rulers, beginning with Śālastambha and ending with Śrī Harṣa. But, on the evidence of the Hayuṅthāl grant, we have shown that there was at least one ruler (Balavarman) after Harṣa. The same inscription (v 8) further states that, in the family of Balavarman were born two princes, who do not, however, appear to have ruled the kingdom, nor is it known whether they were the sons of Balavarman. To quote the verse: Alas ! in that line, shining in the world like lily, moon and milk, two princes were born, Cakra and Arathi who were expert in disregarding the words of preceptors, and therefore, the son of the younger (Arathi) bore the burden of the kingdom (became king). It is suggested by some writers that Cakra and Arathi may be identified with Sālambha and Arathi of the Parbatiyā plates of

119. Khālimpur grant of the Gauḍa ruler Dharmapāla, (*E.I.*, IV, 243f.).
120. See Gait, *History of Assam*, pp. 27-30.
121. R.C. Majumdar, *History of Bengal*, I, p. 103.

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Vanamāla (vv 7-9).[122] But, while in the Hayuṅthāl grant, already referred to, the two princes are not said to have reigned as kings, in the latter grant, Sālambha and Arathi are given the credit of ruling the kingdom. There is again nothing to disbelieve what is given in the grant of Harjjara, and it is also not established that Cakra is to be identified with Sālambha. In any case, there was in all appearance a gap between Balavarman and the two princes Cakra and Arathi, and at the present state of our knowledge, it is impossible to establish who were the rulers ruling the kingdom in the intervening period. On the basis of the genealogy given in the records of the family and the system of chronology we have tentatively worked out, it is reasonable to infer that there were at least two rulers,[123] following Balavarman until the throne was occupied by the son of Arathi of the Hayuṅthāl grant. The unknown rulers may have ruled between A. D. 765-790.

5. Prālambha or Sālambha :

While on the basis of the Tezpur grant (v 7) of Vanamāla, the name of this prince is read as Prālambha, [124] in the Parbatīyā plates of the same ruler, he is distinctly mentioned as Sālambha, and the two names convey almost the same sense. We have already indicated the difficulty of tracing the continuity of the line of Śālastambha after Balavarman and also shown reasons to believe that Sālambha is not to be identified with Cakra. On the basis of this obscurity, it has been held that Prālambha or Sālambha, established a new line when the family of Śālastambha ended with Śrī Harṣa. In the opinion of H.C. Ray, the relation between the two groups : Śālastambha-Harṣa and Prālambha-Tyāgasiṁha is uncertain.[125] N.N. Vasu takes Prālambha as Harṣa's brother, and Bhandarkar identifies Balavarman with Prālambha.[126] But these conclusions are not established, and it is also not shown that Prālambha established a new line. The Bargāon grant (v 10) conclusively proves that all the twenty one rulers of the family of Śālastambha belonged to the same line. The Nowgong grant of Balavarman (v 9-10) also proves that Harjjara (a successor of Prālambha) belonged to the line of Śālastambha. Prālambha's connection with the *Bhauma* family is shown by the grants of Vanamāla (Parbatīyā plates, v 7) which states thus : In his (Bhagadatta or Vajradatta) family was born

122. See *E.I.*, XXIX, p. 149 (f.n. 4).
123. See K.L. Barua, *E.H.K.*, p. 121.
124. P. Bhattacharya, *K.S.*, p. 60.
125. *D.H.N.I.*, I, p. 242.
126. *Social History of Kāmarūpa*, I, p. 158; *E.I.*, XIX-XXIII, pp. 379f.

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one, whose foot-stool was illumined by the light of the crest-jewels of the kings, who was the lord of Prāgjyotiṣa, destroyed the enemy heroes and who bore the strange name Sālambha (Prālambha).[127] The contention of some writers that this has a bearing on the hostility of Prālambha to the Śālastambha-Harṣa group of princes,[128] is not supported by the actual interpretation of the expression: *kṣata-vairi-vīraḥ*, applied to Sālambha, which only means that he destroyed the enemy heroes. The following verse also shows that he joined with the rulers, beginning with Śālastambha and ending with Harṣa, all of whom had ascended the heaven and dyed the horizon with the colour of the flood of the richness of merits of the ancient good kings. There is nothing here to suggest that Sālambha killed all the members of the former ruling family, nor do the verses quoted above in any way indicate that he established an entirely new line of kings.

The continuity of the line of Śālastambha after the two princes Cakra and Arathi of the Hayuṅthāl grant, through Prālambha or Sālambha seems also to rest on the identification of the ruler who followed Arathi. In the Tezpur grant of Vanamāla (v 9) the name of a brother of Prālambha is given, and it is read as Āratha (*Ārathotinṛpaḥ*), and from this it is inferred that Prālambha was also an Āratha, both being the sons of Arathi. It is also believed that Āratha was the elder brother of Prālambha, and the former did not probably reign as king, he being killed in a battle while fighting against his enemies.[129] This theory is no doubt based on the wrong reading and interpretation of the texts of the Tezpur grant of Vanamāla. There are other writers who, as we have already stated, think that Śālambha (Prālambha) is to be identified with Cakra of the Hayuṅthāl grant. This assumption is based on the reading and interpretation of the expression: (*nāmna-Ārathīti nṛpaḥ*), occurring in the Parbatīyā plates of Vanamāla (v 9), the name here being taken as Arathi, and this prince being identified with Arathi of the Hayuṅthāl grant.[130] But, to us it appears that the actual name in the Parbatīyā plates is Ārathī, and it is not very difficult to take him as the younger son of Arathi. The strongest point in our contention is that Cakra and Arathi are not given the credit of ruling the kingdom, but both Sālambha and Ārathī are given the same credit in the

127. While on the basis of the Tezpur grant (V 7) wherein the expression is read as: *Prālambha ityadbhūta nāmadheyaḥ*, Prālambha may be said to have borne a strange or wonderful name, according to the Parbatīyā plates, wherein occurs the expression : *Sālambha ityuddhata nāmadheyaḥ*, Sālambha may be taken to have borne a proud name. Both the expressions have a bearing on the very name Prālambha or Sālambha.

128. See H.C. Ray, *D.H.N.I.*, I, p. 242; Gait, *History of Assam*, p. 32.

129. See P.N. Bhattacharya, *K.S.*, pp. 60, 66, (f.n. 4); *E.H.K.*, p. 111.

130. *E.I.*,XXIX, p. 149 (f.n. 4).

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inscriptions of Vanamāla. It may, therefore, be reasonably held at the present state of our knowledge that Arathi had two sons : Prālambha or Sālambha and Ārathī (Āratha), and the sovereignty passed to the elder of the two. Hence, the theory that Prālambha established a new line of *mleccha* origin, not connected with the former ruling family, or was different from the family of Śālastambha, or that he was hostile to the members of the former ruling dynasty, is unwarranted.

It is difficult to find out the chronology of Sālambha. H.C. Ray places him (Prālambha) towards the beginning of the 9th century A.D., and K.L. Barua ascribes to him the period A.D. 800-20.[131] But, if the two unknown rulers after Balavarman may have ruled between A.D. 765-90, and if the chronology of the family we have worked out is tenable, it is possible that Sālambha's reign may be placed between A.D. 790-810. He was probably the contemporary of Dharmapāla of Gauḍa whose reign witnessed the tripartite struggle for supremacy in Northern India between him, the Rāṣṭrakūṭa king Govinda III (A.D. 794-814) and the Gurjara-Pratihāra king Nāgabhaṭa II.[132] R.D. Banerji places Dharma-Pāla between 769-809,[133] Smith in the 8th century A.D.;[134] S.K. Aiyangar in 795;[135] D.C. Bhattacharya between 788-820 or 744-800;[136] Cunningham in 831;[137] Bhandarkar in the early part of the 10th century A.D.[138] and Majumdar between A.D. 770-810.[139] In view of his contemporaneity with Govinda III and Nāgabhaṭa II, the dates of R.C. Majumdar appear reasonable.

Both the inscriptions of Vanamāla speak highly of Sālambha and seem to refer to his warlike activities. He was the mighty lord of Prāgjyotiṣa, the destroyer of all enemy heroes, justifying his very name, and was the possessor of good qualities of his predecessors: (Parbatīyā plates, vv 7-8). It is difficult, however, to identify the enemies, he must have killed in wars. Ever since Harṣadeva's death, Kāmarūpa was greatly affected by internal trouble, and probably also by external invasions. It may be inferred that the traditional rivalry between Kāmarūpa and Gauḍa was revived, and

131. *D.H.N.I.*, I, p. 242; *E.H.K.*, pp. 134f.
132. Majumdar, *History of Bengal*, I, pp. 104-13.
133. *J.B.O.R.S.*, 1928. pp. 489-538; *M.A.S.B.*, V, pp. 43f.
134. *E.H.I.*, pp. 366f.
135. *J.R.A.S.* (Bombay), (N.S.), III, pp. 124-25.
136. *I.A.*, 1920, pp. 189-92; *I.H.Q.*, III, pp. 571-91.
137. *Archaeological Survey Reports*, XV, p. 150.
138. *E.I.*, VII, p. 33; *Ibid*, IX, p. 26 (f.n. 4).
139. *History of Bengal* , I, p. 104, also *J.P.A.S.B.*, (N.S.), 1921, pp. 1-6.

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it is possible that Sālambha undertook a campaign against the Pālas of Bengal when Dharmapāla was engaged in the long struggle with the Rāṣṭrakūṭas and the Pratihāras. But, on the absence of any definite allusion, it cannot be established whether a contest took place between Kāmarūpa and Gauḍa. Tārānātha, however, refers to Dharmapāla's subjugation of Kāmarūpa.[140] This has been noticed by some writers, like R.P. Chanda[141] and B.C. Sen.[142] The evidence on which the allusion of Tārānātha is based, is not known, nor does he give details of the contest. Did Sālambha succeed in taking possession of some portions of Bengal in the north-east while Dharmapāla was busy in his wars in the west, only to lose them soon afterwards ? In any case, the actual invasion of Kāmarūpa by Dharmapāla is not proved by his Khālimpur grant,[143] or any Pāla epigraph.[144] It is also not proved that the Kāmarūpa ruler could appreciably extend the limits of his kingdom in the western direction so long as his imperial neighbour was in Gauḍa. It is true, however, that Sālambha tried to revive the lost prestige of the kingdom, and he succeeded in establishing a comparatively peaceful reign after a few decades of disorder that overwhelmed Kāmarūpa under the weak rule of his predecessors.

6. Harjjaravarman—the king of kings :

Prālambha or Sālambha was succeeded by his brother Ārathī (Āratha)[145] who, as we have shown reasons to believe, is not to be identified with Arathi of the Hayuṅthāl grant. As given in the grants of Vanamāla (Parbatīyā plates, vv 8-9), his brother (Sālambha) having died, Ārathī, the very fire to numerous enemies and unequalled in valour and munificence, became king. Inscriptions, however, do not give details of his career or any campaign, and it is possible that he had a very short reign of about five years only (810-15).

Ārathī's successor was Harjjaravarman. Though it is not very clear from the inscription (Parbatīyā plates, vv 10-11) that Harjjara's father was Ārathī, it is clearly stated that his mother was Jīvadevī, supported also by the Hayuṅthāl grant (v 10), and it is not improbable that Jīvadevī was Ārathī's queen.[146] The Hayuṅthāl grant states that just as *Yudhiṣṭhira*

140. *I.A.*, IX, p. 366.
141. *Gauḍarājamālā*, p. 23.
142. *Some Historical Aspects of the Ins. of Bengal*, p. 341.
143. *E.I.*, IV, pp. 243f.
144. *K.S.* (Intro.), p. 24 (f.n. 1).
145. See P. Bhattacharya (*K.S.*, p. 66, f.n. 4) for a different view.
146. According to Barua (*E.H.K.*, p. 121) Jīvadevī was Prālambha's queen.

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was born of *Kuntī* and *Abhimanyu* of *Subhadrā*, so also Śrī Harjjara was born of Jīvadevī, who was violent and charming, and like *Yudhiṣṭhira* became the future lord of the earth (vv 10-11). The Parbatīyā grant states (vv 11-12) that from Jīvadevī was the son, king of kings, the illustrious Harjjara whose feet were worshipped by the heads of kings, who was embraced by the goddess *Laṣksmī* of her own accord, and who was like *Yudhiṣṭhira* in religious discourse, *Bhīma* to his enemies and *Jiṣṇu* in battle. The Nowgong plates of Balavarman, however, do not mention the names of both Ārathī and Jīvadevī. The grant (v 10) simply states that in the family of Śālastambha was born a moon-like king, named Harjjara who was an affliction to his enemies. From this some writers infer that Harjjara was not connected with Prālambha (Sālambha) and he belonged to a new line. Dr. Hoernle propounds a wrong theory on the basis of the omission of the name of Prālambha. He writes that the grant of Vanamāla "seems to say distinctly that Prālambha belonged to Naraka's dynasty and that he was the father of Harjjara. On the other hand, the Nowgong grant ignores Prālambha altogether and commences the dynasty with Harjjaravarman. Nor is there anything in the latter grant to connect him with Naraka's dynasty; on the contrary, the non-Hindu sound of the name, Harjjara points to a foreigner", and as both the dynasties were foreigners, "they may have occasionally preferred a claim to belong to the ancient indigenous line of kings".[147] We have already examined the baselessness of such a theory in discussing the origin of the line of Śālastambha, to which Prālambha, Ārathī and his son, Harjjara belonged. There is nothing to prove the foreign origin of a family on the basis of the sound of a particular name of a ruler. It cannot be expected that the entire genealogy of a dynasty should be given in all the grants of a particular family. Such a complete genealogy is not given in many Gupta records or in those of other families of India . We have quoted many verses from the grants of Harjjara and Vanamāla to show that all the rulers Sālambha, Ārathī and Harjjara belonged to the family of Śālastambha which was also connected, at least distantly, with the original family of the *Bhaumas*.

One important event in the career of Harjjara was his coronation ceremony, performed according to religious rites in which the people, including the merchants took an important part.[148] Palaeographically his Hāyunthāl grant is to be placed in about A.D. 825.[149] It is, therefore, likely that he ascended the throne about A.D. 815. His Tezpur Rock

147. *J.A.S.B.*, LXVII, I, p. 105.
148. Hayuṅthāl grant, VV 13-14.
149. See *K.S.*, pp. 44-53.

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epigraph is recorded in the G.E. 510=A.D. 829-30;[150] so the end of his reign may be ascribed to about A.D. 835.

His own inscriptions and those of Balavarman and Vanamāla speak highly of his prowess and good qualities. He was the mighty king of kings, and was embraced by the goddess of fortune, testifying to the prosperity of the kingdom, newly founded by Sālambha. Some writers believe that Gupta influence remained working as late as the time of Harjjara, as his Tezpur inscription is dated in the Gupta era. It proves, according to N.N. Vasu "that the supremacy of the Guptas had long been acknowledged in Kāmarūpa and that Harjjara himself acknowledged it too".[151] This is also the opinion of H.C. Ray .[152] But, we have shown that the Gupta influence was long broken by Bhūtivarman during the 6th century A.D., if not earlier. It is not reasonable to conclude that as late as the 9th century A.D., when the Guptas had long left the political arena, their influence could still be felt. As we have already examined, mere use of an era has very little to do with the political influence of one dynasty upon another.

In both his inscriptions Harjjara assumed the grand epithet of *Mahārājādhirāja Parameśvara Paramabhaṭṭāraka*. This, along with many references to his feudatories, confirms our belief that he was an important ruler and extended his influence over neighbouring lands. He issued a *śāsana* to his feudatories in connection with the settlement of a dispute.[153] During his *abhiṣeka*, the defeated kings and feudatories were also present.[154] His political supremacy is mentioned in the Hayuṅthāl grant (v 12) which states thus: "Harjjara to whose palace, resorted for peace the princes, who in order to conquer one another's kingdoms, kept fighting at the skirts of the hills and dales; in whom all qualities rested in equal degree, and who, though wholeheartedly engaged in works of welfare (for his subjects), can be approached at (spare) intervals and found in an unruffled mood." The grant was found in the Kapili valley. It may be as a result of his victory over the petty chiefs of the hills and the plains in the east and south-east of the kingdom that the grant was issued. This, as rightly pointed out by P. Bhattacharya, indicates the political influence of the kingdom over the furthest limits of the hills.[155] The Nowgong grant

150. *J.B.O.R.S.*, 1917, pp. 508-14.
151. *Social History of Kāmarūpa*, I, p. 160.
152. *D.H.N.I.*, I, pp. 238-39.
153. *J.B.O.R,S.*, 1917, pp. 508-514.
154. Hayuṅthāl grant, VV. 13-14.
155. *K.S.*, p. 52. (f.n. 3).

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(v 11) gives further proof of his splendour and political influence over the neighbouring kings who came to worship him.

Harjjara was probably the contemporary of Devapāla of Gauḍa, who is placed differently by different writers. R.C. Majumdar places him between A.D. 810-850;[156] R.D. Banerji between 809-49[157] and D.C. Bhattacharya, 820-853 or 801-839.[158] He may reasonably be placed in the first half of the 9th century A.D. It is likely that Harjjara came into conflict with the Gauḍa ruler. The wide conquests of Devapāla are mentioned in many inscriptions. The Bhāgalpur grant of Nārāyaṇapāla records that Jayapāla, Devapāla's brother, started under the order of the latter to subdue all quarters. It states thus: "When by order of his brother, he started with an army to subdue all quarters, the lord of the *Uṭkalas* left his capital, driven to despair from afar by the mere name of (Jayapāla), and the king of the *Prāgjyotiṣas* enjoyed peace at last, surrounded by friends, bearing on his lofty head (i.e., being much obliged for) the command of that (prince) which bade (his foes) cease to plan battles".[159] The Monghyr grant records that Devapāla "made tributary the earth between *Revā's* parents (Vindhyas) and *Gaurī's* father (Himalayas) and enjoyed it even as far as *Rāma's* bridge in the south." [160] We cannot, however, make any historical sense of this. The Bādār Pillar epigraph further states that owing to the good advice of his ministers, Devapāla eradicated the race of the *Uṭkalas*, humbled the pride of the *Hūṇas* and scattered the conceit of the rulers of the *Drāviḍa* and *Gurjara*. [161] Here also the reference is not so clear.

The Bhāgalpur grant is, however, significant. R.D. Banerji, on the strength of this, holds that Jayapāla led an expedition against Uṭkala and conquered Prāgjyotiṣa for Devapāla. [162] B.C. Sen contends that the object of the Pāla expedition was to prevent a war between Kāmarūpa and Uṭkala, and the Kāmarūpa king had to accept the authority of Gauḍa. [163] R.C. Majumdar holds that Prālambha or Harjjara accepted Devapāla's sovereignty.[164] But these interpretations lack convincing proof. A.K. Maitra

156. *J.P.A.S.B.*, (N.S.), 1921, pp. 1-6; *History of Bengal*, I, pp. 116f.
157. *J.B.O.R.S.*, 1928, pp. 489-538; *M.A.S.B.*, V, pp. 43f.
158. *I.A.*, 1920, pp. 189-93; *I.H.Q.*, III, p. 571-91; also *E.H.I.*, 366f.
159. *Gauḍalekhamālā*, pp. 58f; *I.A.*, XV, pp. 304f.
160. *E.I.*, XVIII, pp. 304-7.
161. *E.I.*, II, pp. 160-67.
162. *M.A.S.B.*, V, p. 57; *Bāṅglāra Itihāsa*, I, p. 183.
163. *Some Historical Aspects of the Inscriptions of Bengal*, pp. 364-65.
164. *History of Bengal*, I, p. 117.

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finds here a reference to an alliance between Devapāla and the Kāmarūpa king. He adds that, while the ruler of Uṭkala, hearing Jayapāla's very name, fled from his capital, the Prāgjyotiṣa ruler also, "on hearing of Jayapāla's command, dropped all questions relating to warfare and lived very happily all his life, enjoying the company of his relatives." [165] This explanation appears probable. Hultzsch the editor of the grant, thinks that "Jayapāla supported the king of Prāgjyotiṣa successfully against the king of Uṭkala" [166] N.N. Vasu thinks that the Kāmarūpa king entered into an alliance with the Pālas. [167] H.C. Ray, supporting the view that Jayapāla helped the Kāmarūpa king against Uṭkala, seems to hold that the Pāla army really crossed the *Karatoyā*, forcing the prince of the Brahmaputra valley to acknowledge the hegemony of the Pālas. [168] But, this is not supported by the grant in question. There was probably no Pāla invasion of Kāmarūpa, and no acceptance by Kāmarūpa of the Pāla hegemony.[169]

Who was the contemporary Kāmarūpa ruler, mentioned in the Bhāgalpur grant ? While in one place, P. Bhattacharya takes him to be Jayamāla, Harjjara's grandson, or even Balavarman, [170] in another place he takes him to be Harjjara or Vanamāla. [171] The same alternatives are maintained by H.C. Ray. [172] K.L. Barua thinks that the king was probably Jayamāla.[173] On the basis of epigraphy and our system of chronology, it is more reasonable to hold that the ruler was Harjjara, since Jayamāla's career was not brilliant enough to invade Orissa, far less to conquer it. The event can hardly be placed after A.D. 850 when Jayamāla was not reigning.

It is only a superficial interpretation of the Bhāgalpur grant that will make us believe that Orissa was invaded by both the Gauḍa and the Kāmarūpa army. The expression that "the king of Prāgjyotiṣas enjoyed peace at last surrounded by friends," may not imply that the Kāmarūpa army invaded Orissa, or that the king conquered Orissa after making an alliance with Gauḍa. It cannot be assumed that during the brilliant period of Devapāla, the Kāmarūpa army would be allowed to march through his

165. *Gauḍalekhamālā*, pp. 58-65.
166. *I.A.*, XV, p. 308 (f.n. 24).
167. *Social History of Kāmarūpa*, I, p. 159.
168. *D.H.N.I.*, I, p. 248.
169. *K.S.*, Intro., pp. 23-24.
170. *K.S.*, (Intro.), p. 23.
171. *I.H.Q.*, III, pp. 837-50; also P.L. Paul, *Early History of Bengal*, pp. 44-45.
172. *D.H.N.I.*, I, p. 248.
173. *E.H.K.*, pp. 128-29.

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country to Orissa. The credit of conquest should be given to Gauḍa. This is confirmed, as we have noted, by the Bādār Pillar grant, referring to "the eradication of the race of the *Uṭkalas*" by Devapāla. It is possible that just at a time when Jayapāla invaded or conquered Orissa, the Kāmarūpa army under Harjjara invaded Bengal, which was either repelled by Jayapāla and peace was concluded, or returned to Kāmarūpa from the frontier of Bengal after hearing of the conquests of Jayapāla. Inscriptions, in any case, seem to allude to the war-like activities of Harjjara, and we have already referred to the feudatories and the defeated kings attending on him, indicating the king's political influence over his neighbours.

It is generally believd that Harjjara's capital was at Hārūppeśvara, Haṭappeśvara, or Haḍappeśvara, as found in the inscriptions of the family, and the place has been located near Tezpur. P. Bhattacharya contends that Śālastambha himself shifted the capital of the kingdom to this place from ancient Prāgjyotiṣa, and that the name Prāgjyotiṣa during the time of his dynasty stood for the kingdom.[174] K.L. Barua holds that the capital was changed by Harjjara. None of these theories is tenable. In the Hayuṅthāl grant, Hārūppeśvara or Haṭappeśvara is called merely a victorious camp: (*Jayaskandhāvāra*).[175] Karṇasuvarṇa in Bengal is also a victorious camp under the king Bhāskarvarman. In the Tezpur rock inscription of the said king, it is simply called a *pura* (city).[176] The Nowgong grant of Balavarman describes Haḍappeśvara as an ancestral camp (*paitāmaha kaṭaka*).[177] The *kaṭaka* here does not stand for the permanent capital city. Śālambha is described in the inscriptions of Vanamāla as the lord of Prāgjyotiṣa, which seems to stand for the capital, and the same inscriptions refer to beautiful Haḍappeśvara from which place the *śāsanas* were issued (*Śrī Haḍappeśvarāt*),[178] and there is no definite indication here that it was the permanent capital of the family. The name Hārūppeśvara or Haḍappeśvara is derived from an Austric formation like *hara* or *harup*, which means to cover as with a basket or dish.[179] It is associated with a deity and with the attainment of liberation or with a *liṅga* (*Hāṭaka* or *Heṭuka Śūlin*).[180] It is possible that a temple of Śiva was built by Harjjara, which is said to have been re-built by Vanamāla. Extensive ruins of temples and buildings have been found in and around Tezpur, which,

174. *K.S.*, Intro., pp. 22, 25.
175. Line 21; *J.A.R.S.*, I, p. 109f.
176. *J.B.O.R.S.*, 1917, pp. 508f.
177. Line 29; *J.A.S.B.*, LXVI, I, pp. 285f.
178. Parbatīyā plates, V. 7; *J.A.S.B.*, IX, II, pp. 766f.
179. *App. to Cultural History of Assam*, I, pp. 202f.
180. *K.S.*, Intro., pp. 22,25.

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along with the existence of a tank (*Harjjarapukhuri*), keep fresh the memory of Harjjara. During the reign of Vanamāla, Haḍappeśvara must have extended over a vast area, which included the regions from the Bāmuṇi hills on the east to Dah Parvatīyā on the west.[181] It appears that the city of Haḍappeśvara was beautifully built by Harjjara, adorning it with temples and stately buildings, and the place was used as a temporary residence to watch and guard against the incursions of the neighbouring tribes.[182] The necessity to build a second capital city must have been felt because of the traditional rivalry with the western powers, particularly with Gauḍa, and in view of the constant danger to Prāgjyotiṣa. In any case the latter remained the permanent capital of the kingdom of Kāmarūpa. There is no impossibility of the foundation of a new town. The rulers of the Varman line are given the credit of establishing cities, as evidenced by the Nidhanpur grant; and the fact that the *śāsanas* were issued from *Haḍappeśvara*, does not evidently prove that this was the capital of the family.[182a] We have numerous instances from India to show that royal *śāsanas* were issued from places different from the permanent capital, and that the Guptas, for example, founded more than one capital city. The name *Haḍappeśvara* seems to give us a good evidence of the admixture of the Aryan and non-Aryan elements, and the extravagance, with which the place is associated, indicates the growing prosperity of the kingdom and the people.

7. Vanamālavarmādeva—the empire builder of Assam :

With the accession of Vanamāla, son of Harjjara through Śrī Maṅgalā (Parbatīyā plates, v 15), the kingdom entered into a new phase of development. His Tezpur grant was issued in the 19th year of his reign, which may be placed in about A. D. 854.[183] His reign may have covered the period A. D. 835-865.[184] P. Bhattacharya places him in about the middle of the 9th century A. D.,[185] but a slightly earlier

181. See *E.H.K.*, p. 124; *J.A.R.S.*, III, pp. 2-6.

182. *K.S.*, 52 (f.n. 3).

182a. The literary evidence on the period of the Varmans does not seem to mention Prāgjyotiṣa as the capital city of Kāmarūpa, though it was so. Therefore, mere omission of the name in the inscriptions of the family of Śālastambha does not prove anything. On the contrary, the epithet, *Prāgjyotiṣādhipati*, adopted by the rulers of the latter family does prove that Prāgjyotiṣa was the capital, the name of the kingdom having remained as Kāmarūpa.

183. *J.A.R.S.*, II, p. 3; *K.S.*, p. 58.

184. Hoernle places the grant about A.D. 925, and Kielhorn places the rulers from Prālambha to Harjjara between 800-925.

185. *K.S.*, pp. 54-70; also *E.H.K.*, p. 134.

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date fits better into the chronology of the ruler. He was probably the contemporary of Vigrahapāla I and Nārāyaṇpāla of Gauḍa, whose period saw the decline of the Pālas after the death of Devapāla.[186]

Inscriptions bear eloquent testimony to his kingly virtues and remarkable achievements. The Nowgong grant (v v 13-15) states that devoted to *Śiva*, Vanamāla was for a long time king in the land. He possessed a charming body and pleasing disposition. He spoke nothing low and improper and was ever noble. He erected rows of palatial buildings, and decorated the rooms with beautiful pictures. His own inscriptions state that Vanamāla was famous in the world, beautiful, and delighter of the earth like the moon and was adorned with the jewel-wreath of all royal qualities. He was like the moon in the clear sky that was the kings born in the family of Naraka. He rebuilt the lofty temple of *Heṭuka Śūlin*, and endowed it with villages, elephants and temple girls. The feudatory kings came to him frequently to pay their respectful homage to him.[187]

That Vanamāla was a mighty monarch and extended his kingdom through conquests, are testified by his own inscriptions. He was fit for the lordship of the earth or the kingdom extending to the lines of forests on the shores of the ocean; he, who dispersed the mass of darkness that was the enemies and dispersed on the fields of battle the great mass of darkness that was the assemblage of the intoxicated elephants of the mighty enemies; who destroyed completely with his sword of great strength the host of kings who were the very thunderbolt to the hills that were the soldiers of their very proud enemies; out of fear of his valour, some of the kings who were subduers of numerous enemies, fled importunately in different directions, while others readily took up the chowrie (to fan their conqueror or to become his servants); out of fear for whom even the kings who in a war against other rulers shot sharp arrows (themselves) left their territories far away; to whom, whose only weapon was his valour, those kings, who effected formations of the assemblage of intoxicated elephants against other enemies, folded their palms.[188]

The inscriptions, therefore, seem to support that Vanamāla exerted a strong influence over the neighbouring kings through wars as

186. Majumdar, *History of Bengal*, I, pp. 125f.
187. Nowgong grant, VV 16, 19, 24f; Parbatīyā plates, VV 16, 19, 24f.
188. Tezpur grant, VV 17f; Parbatīyā plates, VV 17f.

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well as by peaceful means. The feudatories attended upon him, and the rulers of petty States had to remain constantly in fear of him. His political influence may also be inferred from the fact that he assumed the high sounding title of *Parameśvara Paramabhaṭṭāraka Mahārājādhirāja*, as found in his records. The reference to the extension of his kingdom to the lines of forests, bordered by the ocean, is, however, very significant. This has a bearing no doubt on the extension of the kingdom over the hilly regions in the north and east as well as over the regions of South-east Bengal, including Sylhet, Mymensingh, portions of Dacca, *Samataṭa* and the neighbouring lands. By his Parbatīyā plates Vanamāla donated lands (to the Brāhmaṇa Cūḍāmaṇi) of the village of *Haposa* (*grāma*) lying within the *maṇḍala* of *Svalpa-Maṅgoka* in *Uttarakūla*.[189] The exact location of *Haposa* is difficult to determine. By the Gauhāti grant, Indrapāla donated lands in the village of *Bhaviṣā* in *Kāśīpāṭaka* in the *viṣaya* of *Hāpyoma*. *Haposa* and *Hāpyoma* sound almost the same, but their identification is not well established, in view particularly of the fact that while the former is called a *grāma*, the latter is known as *viṣaya*. The Tezpur grant proves the extension of the limits of the kingdom again to North Bengal after the temporary loss of the region after Harṣadeva. Harjjara himself may have tried for it; but perhaps failed. Vanamāla availed himself of the chance after the removal of the strong Gauḍa ruler, Devapāla, during the weak reign of Vigrahapāla I. By his Tezpur grant, Vanamāla donated to Indoka lands, situated in the village of *Abhiśūravāṭaka*, lying to the west of *Triśrotā* and the north-east of *Chandraparī* (*Chandrapurī*),[190] almost in the same area where Bhūtivarman during the middle of the 6th century A. D. donated lands. P. Bhattacharya thinks that the river *Karatoyā* was the western boundary of the kingdom of Vanamāla.[191] The *Kālikā Purāṇa* (78/43) describes the geographical position of *Triśrotā;* the western boundary of the kingdom no doubt extended beyond the *Karatoyā* at that time. It probably included the regions lying between Teestā and *Kauśikā*, including the major portion of *Puṇḍravardhana*.[192] The weakness of the Pāla rule might have accounted for this. The kingdom of Vanamāla, therefore, comprised almost the whole of modern Assam, parts of south-east Bengal, including Sylhet, Tripurā, Mymensingh and the neighbouring places, and *Puṇḍravardhana* in North Bengal. Thus he revived to some extent the kingdom of Bhāskara; but it does

189. Parbatīyā plates, Lines 48-51.
Hāpyocā is mentioned as a *maṇḍala* in the grant of Vallabhadeva (*E.I.*, V., pp. 181-88).
190. *J.A.S.B.*, IX, II, pp. 766f.
191. *K.S.*, pp. 54-70.
192. Vasu, *Social History of Kāmarūpa*, I, p. 161; *E.H.K.*, p. 125.

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not appear likely that his influence was felt either in Orissa or in further west.

The growing prosperity of the people and the kingdom may be inferred from the copious description of Haṭappeśvara from where the grants were issued, and which was made beautiful by the erection of temples and palatial buildings and which was situated on the bank of the Brahmaputra. There the people of all classes lived happily and the place was inhabited by virtuous men, merchants and the learned. Water of the great river Brahmaputra, running by it, was perfumed by the scent of the flowers falling into it from the numerous creepers, shaken by the hissing sounds produced by the host of serpents, frightened by the cries of the peacocks resting in the woods of tall trees rising from the hills of both its banks; which carried the fragrant flood-waters showered by the clouds arising from the smoke of the black sandal trees, being burnt by the conflagration of the forests near the gardens in the place; its current was filled by the waters that were made pure owing to their constantly washing the slopes of mount *Kāmakūṭa* which was an abode of the glorious *Kāmeśvara* and *Mahā-Gaurī;* which had the people living in the whole neighbourhood of its banks delighted by the fragrance of the musks of the deer.[193] The entire picturesque scene was made sacred by the incantations of *mantras* coming out of the temples. All these carried to distant lands the majestic glory of Vanamāla, who must have dedicated the latter part of his life to religious activities.

The last important event of Vanamāla's reign was the establishment of his son on the throne. The Nowgong grant (vv 16-17) proves that he abdicated in favour of his son Jayamāla, when the latter finished his education and acquired the requisite qualifications for kingship It further states that he starved himself to death, evidently under the influence of religion.

8. Jayamāla or Vīrabāhu

The successor of Vanamāla is disputed by some writers. Gait takes Jayamāla and Vīrabāhu as two princes.[194] Hoernle, explaining verse 16 of the Nowgong grant, which refers to Vanamāla's abdication, holds that the name Vanamāla is used as an adjective of Jayamāla,

193. Tezpur grant; Parbatīyā plates, Lines, 33-47.
194. *History of Assam*, p. 33.

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who, therefore, in his opinion, abdicated in favour of Vīrabāhu.[195] But this interpretation is wrong. It was Vanamāla who abdicated in favour of Jayamāla, whose another name was Vīrabāhu; this is distinctly stated in the said grant and also in the Uttarbarbil plates.[196] The grants state thus: Of him (Vanamāla) was born a son named Jayamāla, just as the moon is born (comes out) of the milky ocean, whose pure fame like that of the jasmine flower and of the moon is found even to-day. That moon eyed Śrī Vanamāla having found his son well- educated and of proper age, conferred on him the royal insignia (made him king). That Jayamāla was known as Vīrabāhu is clear from the verse 18 of the Nowgong grant, which states thus: "Having received the kingdom the king, the excellent Vīrabāhu married (a lady) called Ambā, who was equal to himself in point of family, beauty and age." The same reference is found in the verse 21 of the said grant. Kielhorn is, therefore, right in taking Vīrabāhu as another name of Jayamāla.[197] It is likely that after his accession Jayamāla took the name of Vīrabāhu.[198] In the Nowgong grant, Vīrabāhu is known also as *Raṇastambha*, and in the Guākuchi grant of Indrapāla, *Saṅgrāmastambha* is stated to have been one of the thirtytwo *birudas* of that king. The title '*Raṇastambha*' indicates his warlike activities, and he is said to have distinguished himself in wars.[199] This may refer to his battles with tribal chiefs, but it is possible that he accompanied Vanamāla in the latter's expeditions leading to the occupation of *Puṇḍravardhana*.

Jayamāla was probably the contemporary of Nārāyaṇapāla of Gauḍa whose reign is placed by different writers between A. D. 852-907;[200] 860-914;[201] 860-915 or 845-899.[202] He may be placed roughly between the middle of the 9th and the beginning of the 10th century A. D., and according to our system of chronology, Jayamāla may be placed between A. D. 865-885. Though the Pāla power declined under Vigrahapāla and Nārāyaṇapāla, it is unlikely that Jayamāla could make any headway much beyond the *Karatoyā*, except that he may have consolidated the conquest of Vanamāla in the *Chandrapurī viṣaya*. This appears to be confirmed by the statements of the

195. *J.A.S.B.*, LXVI, I, pp. 293f.
196. Nowgong grant, VV. 16-17; Uttarbarbil plates, VV. 17-18.
197. *J.B.O.R.S.*, II, p. 509.
198. K.L. Barua, *J.A.R.S.*, III, pp. 2-5; *E.H.K.*, p. 128.
199. Nowgong grant, V. 21.
200. R.D. Banerji, *J.B.O.R.S.*, 1928, pp. 489-538; *M.A.S.B.*, V, pp. 43f.
201. Majumdar, *J.P.A.S.B.*, (N.S.), 1921, pp. 1-6.
202. D.C. Bhattacharya, *I.A.*, 1920, pp. 189-93; *I.H.Q.*, III, pp. 571-91.

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epigraphs, quoted above, indicating his warlike career, by such titles as Vīrabāhu and Raṇastambha. Like his father, Jayamāla abdicated the throne in favour of his son, Balavarman. As stated in the grants of the latter, Vīrabāhu or Jayamāla was attacked by a serious disease, and thinking that the world is in vain and man's life is like a water drop, he thought over his last duty in life and on an auspicious day made his son sit on the throne in a proper manner.[203]

9. Balavarman III—the last important ruler of the family :

That Balavarman was the son of Jayamāla, is clear from his own grants (Nowgong grant, vv 19, 23; Uttarbarbil plates, vv 20, 24), which state thus: By him (Jayamāla) was produced from her (Ambā) just as fire from a piece of wood, an excellent son, the celebrated Balavarman of good qualities, whose eyes resembled the undulating petals of the blue lotus with strong shoulders, well-built arms and with an appearance as beautiful as fresh lotus, just opened under the touch of the rays of the rising sun.

His Uttarbarbil grant was issued in the 5th year of his reign (*pañcama-varṣe*). On palaeographic grounds, his Nowgong grant, issued in the 8th year of his reign, has been placed in or about A. D. 975,[204] which appears improbable. D. Bhattacharya ascribes it to A. D. 883 and Kielhorn places Balavarman before A.D. 915,[205] which seems to be chronologically feasible. P. Bhattacharya places him during the first half of the 10th century A. D.,[206] and K. L. Barua, on the basis of the Nowgong grant, places his reign between A.D. 875-890.[207] It is reasonable to place him between A. D. 885-910. He was probably the contemporary of Nārāyaṇapāla of Gauḍa, whose chronology we have already discussed. Like his predecessor Vigrahapāla, Nārāyaṇapāla had a precarious position in Gauḍa which was again invaded by the Rāṣṭrakūṭas and other powers.[208]. This decay of the Pāla power after Devapāla provided an opportunity for Kāmarūpa to extend its limits towards Bengal, and Vanamāla had already given a proof of this by donating lands in the region lying to the west of the Teestā. Jayamāla consolidated these possessions, and it was an opportune moment for Balavarman to make fresh conquests.

203. Nowgong grant, VV., 21-23; Uttarbarbil plates, VV. 22-24.
204. Hoernle, *J.A.S.B.*, LXVI, I, pp. 285f.
205. *J.B.O.R.S.*, II, p. 509.
206. *K.S.*, pp. 71-85.
207. *E.H.K.*, pp. 129, 134.
208. *History of Bengal*, I, pp. 125f.

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In his grants, Balavarman assumes the imperial title of *Mahārājādhirāja Parameśvara Paramabhaṭṭāraka*, indicating his supremacy. There are references to his enemies in his records, which state that he extended his glory after extirpating all his enemies and that he conquered all quarters after defeating his enemies with his own arms which became dark, being stained by his drawn sword: (Nowgong grant, vv 24f). It is difficult to say who his enemies were. By his Uttarbarbil grant, Balavarman donated lands to Śyāmadeva, lying within the *pāṭaka* of *Vapādeva* in the *viṣaya* of *Bāḍāsepattan*. The exact location of the land is doubtful, but if this *viṣaya* is identical with the *Bāḍā viṣaya* of the Kamauli grant of Vaidyadeva, it is probable that the region lay near about the present village of *Bāḍā* in Barpeṭā sub-division.[209] By his Nowgong grant, the king granted lands to the Brāhmaṇa Śrūtidhara in *Heṅsivā*, lying within the *viṣaya* of *Dijjinā*, in the same locality, where Dharmapāla about a century later donated lands by his Śubhaṅkarapāṭaka grant. It lay to the west of *Teestā* or *Karatoyā* in *Puṇḍravardhana*.[210] This confirms our belief that Balavarman made fresh conquests in North Bengal at the cost of the Pālas under Nārāyaṇapāla.

Both the place names in the Nowgong grant appear to be non-Aryan or Boḍo in origin,[211] suggesting that the localities were then inhabited by non-Aryans. The reference in his grant to a battle may mean that Balavarman brought tribal chiefs under subjugation. It is also significant that Brāhmaṇas were established in the midst of the non-Aryan population, a process which was perhaps responsible for the intermixture of peoples of diverse origin from early times. This systematic policy of the Kāmarūpa rulers helped to a great extent not only in the spread of education but also in the contact of diverse cultures, so essential for the political consolidation of the kingdom. The city of *Hārūppeśvara* where the king is said to have resided temporarily, is called an excellent camp, indicating that it was not his permanent capital, to which we have already made a reference. It was, therefore, a second capital, with a grandeur befitting the beautiful scenery on the bank of the Brahmaputra, and its establishment was no doubt considered important, to maintain contact with the neighbouring tribes.

With his personal charm, "fearful of disgrace, harsh towards enemies, gentle towards religious preceptors, truthful, neither contemptuous nor

209. P.C. Choudhury, *Asom Sāhitya Sabhā Patrikā*, 15th year, III, pp. 187f.
210. See P. Bhattacharya, *K.S.*, pp. 164f; *J.A.R.S.*, II, pp. 82-84.
211. *App. to Cultural History of Assam*, I, p. 205.

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vaunting, generous and purified from sin",[212] Balavarman proved himself to be the last of the dutiful and energetic rulers of the line of Śālastambha, managing the affairs of the administration with well-organised governmental machinery.

10. An obscure period—Successors of Balavarman :

The immediate successors of Balavarman are as yet unknown. The Bargāon grant of Ratnapāla (v 10) reveals that there were 21 rulers of the family of Śālastambha, the last being Tyāgasiṁha, who was succeeded by Brahmapāla, who established a new line of the Pālas. But, it is found that Balavarman III was 13th in descent from Śālastambha or 17th, if we include the two unknown rulers after Balavarman II and Cakra and Arathi in the list of rulers. The scribe of the Bargāon grant may have included all these princes as well, in which case it appears that Balavarman was the 17th ruler of the family. If this assumption is correct, there were probably three intervening rulers between Balavarman and Tyāgasiṁha, the last ruler of the line.[213] It is unfortunate that no clue to this gap is found either in the records of Śālastambha's line or in those of the Pālas. Balavarman's reign, according to the system of chronology we have adopted, may have ended in about A.D. 910. The date of the accession of Brahmapāla after Tyāgasiṁha is placed by Hoernle in about A.D. 1000.[214] K.L. Barua places him in or about A.D. 985 on the supposition that Tyāgasiṁha ruled between A.D. 970-85.[215] He infers, therefore, that there was a gap of about a century from A.D. 890 to 970 between Balavarman and Tyāgasiṃha, in which period as many as six rulers ruled.[216] In discussing the period of Brahmapāla, we shall try to show that his accession is to be placed in or about A.D. 990. It is possible, as we have already shown, that there were possibly three rulers between Balavarman and Tyāgasiṁha, and if according to the system of chronology, Balavarman's end may be ascribed to about A.D. 910, the three unknown princes may approximately be placed between A.D. 910-970, and, therefore, Tyāgasiṁha may have ruled between A.D. 970-990, when Brahmapāla ascended the throne. But this gap of about 60 years cannot be bridged over unless new grants are brought to light, nor do we know anything about the reign of Tyāgasiṁha who is simply called 'the illustrious chief' in the Bargāon grant. The obscurity of the period continued until a new line was founded by Brahmapāla.

212. Nowgong grant, Lines 30-32; Uttarbarbil plates, Lines, 33-35.
213. K.L. Barua contends that there were probably six rulers between them: (*E.H.K.*, p. 133).
214. *E.I.*, XVIII, p. 290; also Ray, *D.H.N.I.*, I, p. 247.
215. *E.H.K.*, pp. 134, 149.
216. *Ibid*, p. 133.

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SECTION 4

THE PĀLA LINE

1. Brahmapāla :

The origin of the founder of the Pāla line is given in the grants of the family, indicating that Brahmapāla was of the same *Bhauma* dynasty, to which Puṣyavarman and Śālastambha belonged. The Assamese chronicles[1] mention that the family of Mādhava, whom we have identified with Śālastambha, was followed by one, founded by Jitāri, a Kṣatriya, who is said to have come from the *Drāviḍa* country and brought with him several families of Brāhmaṇas and Kāyasthas from Kanauj and Gauḍa.[1a] It is possible that he came from the *Nālandā* region or Orissa, and was the descendant of the royal princes established by Bhāskara or Harṣadeva, or from the region of North Bengal, which may have been ruled by a royal prince established by Vanamāla. It is interesting that the names of the rulers of this family of Jitāri, as given in the *Hara-Gaurī Saṁvāda*, end with the surname, Pāla like Dharmapāla, Ratnapāla, who is said to have invaded Gauḍa, Somapāla and others, ruling for eight generations, the last being Rāmacandra whom we have identified with Jayapāla. The epigraphs also give a list of 8 kings including Purandarapāla, who reigned for about eight generations. Moreover, the name of the second ruler was Ratnapāla, as given in the grants. He actually defeated a king of *Gauḍa*, as known from the Gāchtal grant of Gopāla. The identification of Brahmapāla with Jitāri, therefore, appears almost certain.

The connection of Brahmapāla with the former ruling family is proved by the Bargāon grant, (v 10) which states thus: "Seeing that the twenty first of them (the line of Śālastambha), the illustrious Tyāgasiṁha by name, had departed to heaven without (leaving) any of his race (to succeed him), his officials, thinking it well that a *Bhauma* (of Naraka's race) should be appointed as their lord, chose Brahmapāla from among his kindred to be their king on account of his fitness to undertake the government of the country." The Khonāmukhi grant (v 4) of Dharmapāla records in the

1. *Hara Gaurī Saṁvāda*, Chaps. VI-VII; P.C. Bagchi, *I.H.Q.*, XVIII, pp. 231-60.

1a. The tradition about the importation of Brāhmaṇas from Kanauj and other places to Assam, not being confirmed by epigraphs of the time, has little historical value. On the contrary, it was from this part of India that these families migrated to other parts and were settled by the rulers.

H. 15

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same strain. "In that royal family was born a king, named Brahmapāla who was like a *Kulācala* and equal to *Indra*." The same reference is found in the Śubhaṅkarapāṭaka (v 4) and the Puṣpabhadrā grants (v 3) of Dharmapāla, and Gāchtal inscription of Gopāla (v 12). The election of Brahmapāla has an interesting parallel with that of Gopāla of Gauḍa.[2]

In spite of this link with the lines of Puṣyavarman and Śālastambha, both connected with the *Bhauma* dynasty, Hoernle opines that the line of Śālastambha ended with Harṣa, and was succeeded by another foreign dynasty, beginning with Prālambha and ending with Tyāgasiṁha, after whom the dynasty of Bhagadatta was restored in the person of Brahmapāla.[3] This is not supported by the grants we have quoted. Hoernle further adds that all these families were founded by aboriginal "tribal chiefs, who aggrandising themselves, adopted Hinduism and got invented for themselves a quasi-Kṣatriya descent. All the genealogical details, therefore, before Brahmapāla, Śālastambha and Prālambha (or Harjjara) are unhistorical, the real lines commencing with those names. The lineage of Bhagadatta seems to have been a favourite one for the chiefs of Kāmarūpa to adopt." [4] Gait [5] and Ray [6] write in the same strain, referring to the non-Hindu, aboriginal or Mongolian origin of all these lines. We need not enter into this controversy again, which we have already discussed with regard to the line of Śālastambha. The epigraphs do not support this view of the foundation of different dynasties, one tracing its origin from Bhagadatta and the other indicating a foreign origin. There is absolutely nothing to suggest that all these families were tribal Mongolian groups. We have shown enough reasons in dealing with the origin of the Varman and Śālastambha lines to prove that none betrays an aboriginal or Mongolian origin. The evidence from epigraphy, supported by literary sources, justifies our conclusion that the original founders of the dynasty came under the influence of the Aryans. Puṣyavarman or Śālastaṁbha may have been designated as *mlecchas* or non-Aryans because of the Alpine origin of the original founder of the *Bhauma* dynasty, and also because, as has already been noted, the rulers by now adopted Buddhism or at least patronised the faith. Not to speak of the rulers of the Varman and Śālastambha lines, Brahmapāla himself is said to have established Brāhmaṇas and Kāyasthas in the kingdom. So, by the time of the establishment of the Varman line, not to speak of the family

2. *E.I.*, IV, pp. 243f.
3. *J.A.S.B.*, LXVII, I, pp. 103-104.
4. *J.A.S.B.*, LXVI, I, pp. 120-121.
5. *History of Assam*, p. 30f.
6. *D.H.N.I.*, I, pp. 248-49.

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of Brahmapāla, the rulers, notwithstanding their Alpine connection, were rightly designated as propagators of the *Āryyadharma*, patrons of religion and the dispellors of the darkness of the age.

The election of Brahmapāla, owing to his fitness to rule the kingdom, is testified by the Bargāon grant. The event was important in the political history of the land. It is evident that Tyāgasiṁha left no heir to succeed him, and Brahmapāla, who may have been working as a governor somewhere in North Bengal or Orissa, belonging to a collateral family, was invited by the important officials of the State to ascend the throne.[7] There is no good ground for believing, as believed by K.L. Barua, that such election was a myth.[8] We have good evidence of such election from other parts of India. Brahmapāla was chosen king not only because of his connection with the former ruling dynasty, having a rightful claim to the throne in the absence of any direct heir, but also because of his ability to undertake the difficult task of ruling the kingdom and protecting the people, the basis of sovereignty in ancient India.

We face the same chronological difficulty with regard to this, as with the earlier lines. H. C. Ray[9] places Brahmapāla about A.D. 1000 and K.L. Barua in 985.[10] If Hoernle is right in placing the beginning of the reign of his immediate successor, Ratnapāla in A.D. 1010,[11] Brahmapāla's accession may be placed in about A.D. 990. He was probably the contemporary of the Gauḍa ruler Mahīpāla I who is placed between A.D. 974-1036.[12]

The Bargāon grant (v 11) gives a hint of the warlike character of Brahmapāla. "Single handed he overcame his enemy in battle—his warriors have always thought very highly of (the conduct of) their home staying (king), seeing that his enemies fled away in all eight directions." On the basis of the Belāva grant of Bhojavarman, K.L. Barua supposes that Jātavarman invaded Kāmarūpa and defeated Brahmapāla, though he could

7. N.N. Vasu, (*Social History of Kāmarūpa,* I, pp. 189f) holds that a certain Rājyadhara occupied portions of Bengal or Koch Bihar during these troublous times. But this is not supported by inscriptions.

8. *E.H.K.*, pp. 135-36.

9. *D.H.N.I.*, I, p. 247.

10. *E.H.K.*, p. 149.

11. *J.A.S.B.*, LXVII, I, p. 102.

12. See R.D. Banerji, *J.B.O.R.S.*, 1928, pp. 489-538; *M.A.S.B.*, V., pp. 43-113; R.C. Majumdar, *J.P.A.S.B.*, (N.S.) 1921, pp. If; D. C. Bhattacharya, *I.A.*, 1920, pp. 189-93; *I.H.Q.*, III, pp. 571-91; V. Smith, *E.H.I.*, pp. 366f.

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not annex the kingdom.[13] N.N. Vasu opines that he actually inflicted a defeat on the king of Kāmarūpa.[14] This Varman line of kings was ruling from Vikramapura in East Bengal during the 11th century A.D. when the Pāla rule after Mahīpāla I declined in Gauḍa.[15] By the Belāva grant, land was donated in *Puṇḍravardhana*. It states thus : "Seizing the (great) glory of *Pṛthu*, son of *Veṇa*, espousing *Vīraśrī* (the daughter) of *Karṇa*, extending his supremacy among the *Aṅgas*, conquering the fortunes of *Kāmarūpa*: (*paribhavaṁstāṁ-Kāmarūpa-śrīyaṁ*) puting to shame the strength of the arms of *Divya*, crippling the dignity of *Gobardhana* and giving away all his wealth to Brāhmaṇas, he (Jātavarman) established his own paramount sovereignty."[16] Basak holds "that Jātavarman might have availed himself of this opportune moment of the revolt of Varendra of the Kaivartas under *Divya* for proceeding towards Kāmarūpa and bringing the province under his own sway."[17] But the actual interpretation of the statement, 'conquering the fortunes of Kāmarūpa,' does not imply the invasion of Kāmarūpa or the defeat of Brahmapāla, not to speak of bringing whole Kāmarūpa under Jātavarman's sway. As we shall show, the statement has probably a reference to the loss of Kāmarūpa possession in North Bengal. If Jātavarman was the contemporary of Vigrahapāla III of Bengal, who cannot be placed earlier than the middle of the 11th century A.D.,[18] the event can hardly be ascribed to the period of Brahmapāla whose reign falls between A.D. 990-1010 only. If there is any historical basis for this very wide conquest of Jātavarman, the event can be ascribed to the reign of Gopāla or Harṣapāla, most probably the latter one. In any case, it does not imply the actual invasion of Kāmarūpa proper. Hence the statement of A. Banerji[19] and P.L. Paul[20] that Jātavarman crippled the power of the king of Kāmarūpa, and that of R.D. Banerji[21] that he actually conquered Kāmarūpa, are not established.[22]

The extension of the kingdom during Brahmapāla's reign in the west is doubtful; it is likely that his sway did not extend to Bengal. According

13. *E.H.K.*, p. 137.
14. *Social History of Kāmarūpa*, I, p. 192.
15. R.C. Majumdar, *History of Bengal*, I, pp. 197-204.
16. *E.I.*, XII, (V.8) pp. 37-44; N.G. Majumdar, *Ins. of Bengal*, III, pp. 14 f.
17. *Ibid.*
18. P.L. Paul, *Early History of Bengal*, pp, 55-57, 75. R.C. Majumdar places Jātavarman during the second half or the third quarter of the 11th century A.D; (*History of Bengal*, I, pp. 197-204).
19. *A.B.O.R.I.*, XIX, pp. 298-305.
20. *Early History of Bengal*, p. 79.
21. *Bāṅglāra Itihāsa*, I, p. 277.
22. P. Bhattacharya, *K.S.* (Intro.), p. 39.

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to the Bāṅgarh grant,[23] Mahīpāla I revived the paternal kingdom; Majumdar thinks that this refers to Varendra in North Bengal.[24] Moreover, the Chandras, who established their petty kingdom in East Bengal, ruling from Vikramapura, also became powerful. By two grants, Śrīchandra donated lands in *Puṇḍravardhana;* he probably flourished towards the close of the 10th or the beginning of the 11th century A.D.,[25] when Brahmapāla or his son Ratnapāla was ruling. But in the east Kāmarūpa included greater portions of modern Assam including Nowgong. Since the 4th century A.D., traces of the existence of small principalities like *Ḍavāka* are found in modern Nowgong, adjoining the Mikir Hills, where remains of forts, temples and buildings are yet to be seen. Some of them are attributed to the capital of a king, named Haṁsadhvaja. The Tāntrik work *Pag Som Zon Zan* makes mention of another ancient kingdom of *Kadali* in the same locality, along with others. It is associated with the activities of Mīnanātha and Gorakṣanātha of a little later period than Brahmapāla. During their time the ruler of *Kadali* was a woman, Kamalā, helped by her sister and ministers.[26] The antiquity of the place is unknown. This kingdom of '*Nārīrājya*' is located by some in Maṇipur or Burma[27] or Cāchār or even in the North-Western Frontier;[28] but it is rather to be located in the *Kadali*, Nowgong, ruled probably by a Kachāri or Jaintīā queen,[29] enjoying the liberty accorded to women by the Tāntrik-Buddhists, and possibly as a feudatory of the Pālas of Assam. This place at a later time became associated with the birth of two noted Assamese writers, Mādhava Kandali and Ananta Kandali. This is another instance of the contact of the Aryan and non-Aryan people in the kingdom and of the influence of Tāntrik-Buddhism, which flooded Eastern India, particularly Kāmarūpa under the patronage of the Pāla line.

The last important act of Brahmapāla was his abdication in favour of his son. This is proved by the Bargāon grant which states thus: "Then having placed him (Ratnapāla) on the throne of the dynasty of Naraka—he (Brahmapāla)—went to heaven; for noble minded men who know the good and evil of the world, know how to do what is suitable to the occasion."[30]

23. *E.I.*, XXII, p. 152.
24. *History of Bengal*, I, pp. 136-37.
25. Majumdar, *History of Bengal*, I, pp. 190-97.
26. See *Gorakṣavijaya* (Ed. A.K. Sāhitya Viśārada) p. 197.
27. *Maināmatir Gān* p. 22 (f.n. 2).
28. H.C. Chakladar, *Social Life in Ancient India*, pp. 59f.
29. R.M. Nath, *J.A.R.S.*, VII, pp. 19-23.
30. V. 15; Śuālkuchi grant, Line 5.

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2. Ratnapāla—founder of the greatness of the family :

The accession of Ratnapāla witnessed another period of prosperity of Kāmarūpa. That he was the son of Brahmapāla, belonging to the former ruling dynasty, is evident from the grants, which also describe him 'as the mighty crusher of enemies,' and 'the possessor of priceless virtues', who 'emulated the renowned good deeds of *Rāma* and *Kṛṣṇa*.' [31] His own grants speak of him in the same strain. "By him (Brahmapāla) —was begotten on her (his wife) a son, called Ratnapāla, who gained renown because his people justly concluded that a jewel-like king, would, by his good qualities, foster the most worthy among them." [32]

The many sided qualities of this ruler are highly praised in most of the epigraphs of the family.[33] He "was of bright lustre and worthy of his name; he was a victor in battles and, the royal Goddess of Fortune manifested herself at his feet, that were adorned by the garlands of crests of kings."[34]

It is evident from his Bargāon grant that Ratnapāla had the credit of building a new fortress in the capital, or fortified the old city of Prāgjyotiṣa, giving it a new name of *Durjayā* (impregnable). The grandeur of the capital is depicted in poetic style, where "the heat (of the weather) is relieved by the copious showers of ruttish water flowing from the temples of his troops of lusty elephants, which are presented to him by hundreds of kings, conquered by his arms, entwined in the clusters of the flashes of his sharp sword. Though the capital is crowded with a dense forest, as it were, of the arms of his brave soldiers—yet it is fit to be inhabited by wealthy people (merchants).—It is frequented by many hundreds of well-to-do people just as a forest on the heights of the *Malaya* mountain (is frequented) by snakes. It is adorned by learned men, religious preceptors, and poets, who have made it their place of resort—It resembles the summit of mount *Kailāsa* in being the residence of the *Parameśvara* (*Śiva*) and in being inhabited by a *Vitteśa* (*Kuvera*)." [35]

There can be no doubt that *Durjayā* stands for Prāgjyotiṣapura.[36] P. Bhattacharya's contention that the capital was shifted to this place

31. Gauhāti grant, V. 9.
32. Bargāon grant V. 13; Śuālkuchi grant, Line 4.
33. Bargāon grant , Lines 47-50; Śuālkuchi grant, lines 23-26.
34. Khonāmukhi grant of Dharmapāla, V. 5; Śubhaṅkarapāṭaka grant, V. 5; see also Gāchtal ins. of Gopāla, vv. 14-16.
35. Bargāon grant, Lines 28-33; Śuālkuchi grant, Lines 6-7.
36. The location of *Durjayā* in Nowgong by R.M. Nath (*J.A.R.S.*, V., 15) is quite unlikely.

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from Hārūppeśvara by Brahmapāla,[37] is not true; because we have shown that Hārūppeśvara or Haḍappeśvara was only a temporary residence of the family of Śālastambha, and Prāgjyotiṣa remained the capital not only of Śālastambha's family but also of the Pālas themselves. Hoernle contends that Ratnapāla either "founded it or made it into a fortified place and fixed it as the residence of his dynasty. The fact that the Pāla kings resided in the fort of *Durjayā* and the Harjjara dynasty in the 'ancestral camp' at Hārūppeśvara, while yet both dynasties called themselves 'lords of Prāgjyotiṣa,' may perhaps justify the conclusion that in their time—Prāgjyotiṣa, which was originally the name of a town became the name of a country."[38] None of these theories appears tenable. Hārūppeśvara, as held by Hoernle himself, was only a camp, or a place of temporary residence. Hence, there is no question of the shifting of the capital to *Durjayā*. The probability appears to be that in view of the traditional rivalry between Kāmarūpa and Gauḍa and living in the midst of hostile neighbours, Ratnapāla built a strong fortress in the heart of the old city of Prāgjyotiṣa. The epithet, '*Prāgjyotiṣādhipati*' seems to have stood rather for the city than the country in this particular case, though it may have stood for both. The latter alternative is made improbable by the fact that Kāmarūpa was still the name of the kingdom. K.L. Barua, supporting P. Bhattacharya, holds that Brahmapāla shifted the capital to Gauhati from Hārūppeśvara, and Ratnapāla simply strengthened it.[39] This theory is also not tenable. H.C. Ray is of the opinion that "it would perhaps be wrong to accept this name (*Durjayā*) as an alias for Prāgjyotiṣapura as Hoernle has done. It is not unlikely that these capitals (Prāgjyotiṣa, Hārūppeśvara, *Śrī-Durjayā*) may have been situated in the neighbourhood of the modern town of Gauhāti."[40] But Hoernle's identification of *Durjayā* with Prāgjyotiṣa is not wrong, and Ray has made a mistake in stating that Hārūppeśvara lay near Gauhāti. It is to be located in modern Tezpur, far away from Gauhāti. *Durjayā*, as its name indicates, was a fortified place in Prāgyotiṣa, which remained the capital of the line of rulers, beginning with Puṣyavarman, if not earlier, and ending with the Pāla line, or even later.[40a]

37. *K.S.*, (Intro.), p. 25. Even Gopāla issued his Gāchtal grant from the sacred city of *Haḍapyaka : Haḍapyaketi puṇyā purī*.

38. *J.A.S.B.*, LXVII, I, p. 105.

39. *E.H.K.*, pp. 137-38.

40. *D.H.N.I.*, I, pp. 250f.

40a. That *Durjayā* is in Prāgjyotiṣa is explained by the expression: *Prāgjyotiṣeṣu Durjayā* (Bargāon grant, L 40). The actual location of this fortified place is not known; but it is possible that it lay to the south of the present Kālāpāhār, surrounded on all sides by hills. The palatial buildings inside may have been strengthened by construction of fortresses.

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We have two records of the reign of Ratnapāla. His Bargāon grant was recorded in the 25th [41] and the Śuālkuchi grant in the 26th year of his reign.[42] Hoernle places him between A.D. 1010—1050, which appears to be long; K.L. Barua places him between A.D. 1000—1030,[43] which also does not fit into the chronology we have worked out for the Pāla line. The most probable date appears to be A.D. 1010-1040, and as his second grant was recorded in the 26th year of his reign, it is possible that he had a fairly long reign of about 30 years. He was probably the contemporary of Mahīpāla I and Nyāyapāla; the latter has been dated differently by different writers, ranging from A.D. 1025 to 1054.[44]

His own grants and those of Indrapāla and Dharmapāla point to Ratnapāla's warlike activities. As the Bargāon grant (v 14) states , because "of the elephants' pearls, carried forth by the impetus of the unrestrainable stream of blood, running from the split foreheads of the elephants of his enemies, his (Ratnapāla's) battle field looked beautiful like a market place, strewn with the stores of merchants and ruby-coloured through (the blood of) the slain." The Gauhāti grant refers to him as 'the mighty crusher of enemies.' [45] A significant reference to contemporary powers is made in the description of his capital: "Like the cloth which protects the king's broad chest, its boundaries were encompassed by a rampart, furnished with a fence strong like that used for the game-birds of the *Śakas*, fit to cause chagrin to the king of *Gurjara*, to give fever to the heads of the untameable elephants of the chief of *Gauḍa*, to act like the bitumen in the earth to the lord of *Kerala*, to strike awe into the *Bāhikas* and *Taikas*, to cause discomfiture (consumption) to the master of the Deccan and generally to serve for the purpose of discomfiting the (king's) enemies." [46] It is suggested that Ratnapāla actually came into hostile conflict with the powers mentioned in the grant. N.N. Vasu thinks that it refers to an unsuccessful attempt and invasion of Kāmarūpa by the said powers, during the time of Ratnapāla.[47] H.C. Ray contends that the statement may have a bearing on contemporary incidents. He identifies the Kerala king with Rājendra

41. *J.A.S.B.*, LXVII, I, p. 102.
42. *Ibid*, pp. 120-125.
43. *E.H.K.*, 149. P. Bhattacharya places him during the first half of the 11th century A.D. (*K.S.*, pp. 89-109).
44. R.D. Banerji, *J.B.O.R.S.*, 1928, pp. 489-538; *M.A.S.B.*, V, pp. 43f; R.C. Majumdar, *J.P.A.S.B.*, (N.S.) 1921, pp. 1-6; D.C. Bhattacharya, *I.A.*, 1920, pp. 189-93; *I.H.Q.*, III, pp. 571-91.
45. VV. 9, 15; also Khonāmukhi grant, V. 5.
46. Bargāon grant, Lines 34-35; Śuālkuchi grant, Lines 11-12.
47. *Social History of Kāmarūpa*, I, p. 167.

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Chola I (A.D. 1013-44) and the lord of the Deccan with the Chālukya Vikramāditya VI (A.D. 1076-1126). He takes the Taikas and the Bāhikas as the Turkish invaders. The king of Gurjara was either Rājyapāla (1018-19) or Trilocanapāla (1019-27). The presence of the Gurjaras in Magadha and North Bengal, Ray writes, made them familiar to the Kāmarūpa poets.[48]

Hoernle, commenting that the Kāmarūpa king actually came into conflict with them, identifies the Gurjara king with the Western Chālukya Jayasiṁha III or Someśvara I; the Kerala king with Chola Rājarāja; the Gauḍa ruler with Mahīpāla or Nyāyapāla and the Bāhikas and the Taikas with the Trans-Indus people of Balkh and the Tajiks.[49] S. L. Katare seems to take Ratnapāla as a scion of the Gauḍa Pālas, and further adds that the Chālukya army marched through Magadha, Vaṅga, Aṅga and Gauḍa, reaching Kāmarūpa. He identifies the master of the Deccan, who is taken by him to have been defeated by Ratnapāla, with Vikramāditya VI Chālukya of Kalyāṇa. He concludes that owing to the difficulties of the region, Vikramāditya had to return.[50] But Ratnapāla had no connection with the Pālas of Gauḍa,[51] and the supposed invasion of Kāmarūpa or the defeat of this Vikramāditya probably did not occur at all.

The defeat of a Kāmarūpa ruler by certain Vikramāditya is, however, recorded in Bilhaṇa's *Vikramāṅkadevacarita*.[52] Bühler, the editor of the work, identifies this Vikramāditya with Tribhuvanamalla of Kalyāṇa. He agrees that the reference to the defeat of the rulers of Kāmarūpa and Gauḍa is strange, but suggests that "he made with his cavalry a raid into their territories."[53] P. Bhattacharya takes the king to be Karṇāṭendu Vikramāditya and further adds that the invasion took place either during the reign of Indrapāla or Harṣapāla, but this did not result in the loss of any Kāmarūpa territory.[54] K.L. Barua believes that Harṣapāla became involved in a war with Bilhaṇa's Vikramāditya Chālukya VI.[55] H.C. Ray places the invasion during Ratnapāla's reign,[56] which is chronologically impossible. R.S. Tripathi surmises that "Ratnapāla of Kāmarūpa,

48. *D.H.N.I.*, I, pp. 250-51.
49. *J.A.S.B.*, LXVII, I, pp. 105f.
50. *I.C.*, IV, pp. 43-52.
51. K.L. Barua, *I.C.*, IV, pp. 263-64.
52. *Chap*, III, *śloka* 74.
53. *Intro. to the Vikramāṅkadevacarita*, pp. 23, 31.
54. *K.S.*, (Intro.), p. 38.
55. *E.H.K.*, p. 142.
56. *D.H.N.I.*, I, pp. 250f.

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however, beat back the Chālukya army, which then returned by way of Southern Kośala." [57] If the invader of Kāmarūpa was Vikramāditya Chālukya VI (1076-1126), the invasion can hardly be placed during Ratnapāla's reign, Even Vikramāditya's predecessor Someśvara I, who reigned from A.D. 1043 to 1068, could not have been the contemporary of Ratnapāla, even granting that Ratnapāla reigned between 1010-1050; because the Bargāon grant, referring to the foreign powers, was recorded in the 25th year of his reign, in which case it was issued about A.D. 1035. These writers are under the impression that the Chālukya king, mentioned in the Bargāon grant, was the same as Bilhaṇa's Vikramāditya. Moreover, while that Deccan king in the grant is said to have been defeated by Ratnapāla, Vikramāditya of Bilhaṇa is given the credit of the defeat of the Kāmarūpa king. If there is any historical basis for the reference in the work, Vikrāmaditya was no other than the Chālukya Vikramāditya VI of Kalyāṇa, whose contemporary king in Kāmarūpa was neither Ratnapāla nor Indrapāla but probably Harṣapāla, who may be placed between A.D. 1085-1095.

There is really no good reason to believe that all the contemporary powers mentioned in the Bargāon grant, actually invaded the kingdom, or that Ratnapāla, coming into hostile conflict with them, made them turn back. While the reference has an echo of the existence of such powers, the poetic description of the capital refers only to the impregnability of the fortified palace of Durjayā.[58] It was wise on Ratnapāla's part to take necessary precautions and provide for an invincible fortress in case of attack. The references to his warlike activities in other epigraphs probably refer to the suppression of hostile chiefs within Kāmarūpa proper or in North Bengal, which was probably brought under Kāmarūpa at the time. That he defeated a king of Gauḍa (*Gauḍarāja*) named Rājyapāla in a great war by strength of his own arms is evident from verse 16 of the Gāchtal inscription of Gopāla. But this Rājyapāla could not have been the son of Rāmapāla of Gauḍa, who is placed during the end of the 11th and the begining of the 12th century A. D. The political supremacy of the monarch is also attested by the fact that in his grants, he assumed the high sounding epithet of '*Parameśvara-Paramabhaṭṭāraka-Mahārājādhirāja*.' The decline of the Pāla rule in Gauḍa after Mahīpāla I,[59] gave an opportunity for the extension of the influence of the kingdom, at least towards North Bengal and over Gauḍa.

57. *History of Ancient India*, p. 422.
58. *K.S.* (Intro.), p. 25.
59. Majumdar, *History of Bengal*, I, pp. 136f.

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3. Purandarapāla :

Epigraphy seems to support the view that Ratnapāla's son did not reign. This is clear from the Guākuchi grant (v 17) of Indrapāla, which states that his father having gone to heaven, his (Ratnapāla's) grandson Indrapāla became king. This is confirmed by the Khonāmukhi grant of Dharmapāla, which records thus: "Of him (Ratnapāla) was born a son named Purandarapāla, he, the only abode of splendour and performer of pious deeds, who was united with his ancestors while a prince owing to the irony of fate, leaving behind Indrapāla—born of him."[60] Heornle is, therefore, right in suggesting that Purandarapāla died during the life-time of Ratnapāla, who was succeeded by his grandson Indrapāla.[61] This is also clear from verse 20 of the Gāchtal inscription of Gopāla.

It is evident, however, from other grants[61a] that Purandarapāla was connected with the adminstration of the kingdom, perhaps helping his father, or was established as a ruler of some province by Ratnapāla. This is confirmed by the Gauhāti grant of Indrapāla: "His (Ratnapāla's) son was Purandarapāla, a ruler of wide renown, liberal, jovial, pious and accomlished in all arts, a hero as well as a poet: (*śūraśca sukaviśca*)—who being passionately fond of the chase gave more than once extraordinary proof of it by the way in which he captured hostile kings like tigers".[62]

That he was probably a ruler over the extreme north-eastern region of Assam, near modern Sadiyā, seems to be indicated by his marriage of a princess from that region. The Gauhāti grant states that he married Durlabhā who was descended from the royal races of the extreme kingdoms, conquered by the victorious arms of Jamadagni's son: (*Paraśurāma*): *Jāmadagnyabhuja-vikramārjita-prājya-rājya-nṛpa-vaṁśa-sambhavā*).[63] The reference is probably to the ancient *Kuṇḍina* of Bhīṣmaka, as given in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*[64] and the existence of which is shown by the ruins of forts and temples.[65] The reference is significant in that it shows that

60. V. 6; also Śubhaṅkarapāṭaka grant, V. 6.
61. *J.A.S.B.*, LXVI, I, pp. 116-120.
61a. See Gāchtal ins. (V. 16-20) of Gopāla which describes him as a ruler of wide renown, but who predeceased his father.
62. VV. 11-12; Guākuchi grant, VV 11-12.
63. V. 13; Guākuchi grant, V. 13.
64. *Bk.* V, chap. XXVI; *K.S.*, pp. 130f.
65. See Hannay, *J.A.S.B.*, XVII, I, pp. 459f.

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Ratnapāla's kingdom may have touched the north-eastern frontiers of modern Assam. Purandarapāla, by a marriage alliance, may have got possession of the kingdom of Kuṇḍīna during the life-time of his father, over which he ruled as a prince. The region was inhabited by Tibeto-Burmans and in the midst of them a Hindu kingdom or province was established. Both literature and archaeology seem to support the view that a colony of Alpines or Aryans settled near about Sadiyā, which helped in the intermixture of Hindu and non-Hindu elements from early times.

4. Indrapāla— a conqueror of renown :

As Purandarapāla did not reign as king, his son Indrapāla directly succeeded Ratnapāla. His Gauhāti grant was issued in the 8th [66] and Guākuchi grant in the 21st year of his reign.[67] P. Bhattacharya places him towards the middle of the 11th century A. D.[68] Hoernle ascribes the first grant to about A. D. 1050;[69] it is possible that Indrapāla reigned between A. D. 1040-1065. He was probably the contemporary of the Gauḍa ruler Vigrahapāla III, who is placed between A. D. 1041 and 1076.[70]

The grants of the family speak highly of this ruler. His Gauhāti grant (vv 15-16) states that he "kept control over himself and was foremost among the just and righteous, who vanquished all his enemies and who, like the light of the east (the sun), illumined the whole terrestrial globe; before whom, when he sat on the throne, the mosaic floor of his audience hall looked like a fruit covered tree as the jewels fell from the crowns of the princes as they voluntarily stood, reverently bowing before him with joined hands; who dived into and passed across the deep and broad streams of all knowledge. During the righteous and virtuous reign of this king, the earth was heavy and greatly flourishing and became the cow that yields all desires to men, as in the time of *Pṛthu*". He "properly ruled the earth for a long time, vanquished the enemy by dint of his might, performed many sacrifices pleasing to *Indra*, and to the damsels he was like *Kāmadeva*".[71]

66. *J.A.S.B.*, LXVI, I, pp. 116-120; *K.S.*, pp. 116-129.
67. *K.S.*, pp. 130-135.
68. *K.S.*, pp. 116-129.
69. *J.A.S.B.*, LXVI, I, pp. 116-120.
70. R.C. Majumdar, *J.P.A.S.B.*, (N.S.) 1921, pp. 1-6; R.D. Banerji, *J.B.O.R.S.*, 1928. pp.489-538; D.C. Bhattacharya, *I.A.*, 1920, pp. 189-93; *I.H.Q.*, III, pp. 571-591.
71. Khonāmukhi grant, V 7; also Śubhaṅkarapāṭaka grant, V. 7.

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Indrapāla was responsible both for the proper organisation of the State machinery and the augmentation of the prosperity of all. His capital *Durjayā* is described in the same poetic style as it was under Ratnapāla. He "had a residence of corresponding virtues, a town full of elephants, horses and jewels, and impregnable to the attacks of any royal dynasty, when it was named *Śrī Durjayā*".[72] As we have stated, it formed only a part of the old city of Prāgjyotisa. "There is nothing", as Hoernle rightly remarks "in the land-grants to show that Prāgjyotiṣa had ceased to be the capital of the country in the time of either Balavarman or Indrapāla.—At the same time it would seem that Indrapāla ordinarily resided in the townlet (*nāgarī*) *Śrī Durjayā* which was a strong fort, while according to Nowgong grant, Balavarman appears to have ordinarily resided in Hārūppeśvara which is described as his *paitāmahakaṭaka* or an ancestral camp".[73] This disposes the theory of P. Bhattacharya, K. L. Barua and others of the establishment of different permanent capitals in different places by the families of Śālastambha and Brahmapāla.

In his grants, the king assumes the high sounding epithet of '*Parameśvara Paramabhaṭṭāraka Mahārājādhirāja*'. By his Gauhāti grant, land was donated in the village of *Bhaviṣā* in *Kāśīpāṭaka* in the *viṣaya* of *Hāpyoma*. The exact location of the land is doubtful. By his Guākuchi grant, land was granted in the *Paṇḍarībhūmi* in *Mandi Viṣaya* to a Brāhmaṇa hailing from *Śāvathi*, identified with *Śrāvasti* in Bengal; with the exception of *Śāvathi* all these place names are Boḍo in origin.[74] It was the systematic policy of the Kāmarūpa rulers to create Brāhmaṇa *agrahāras* in the midst of non-Aryan people, which served both political and cultural purposes. Indrapāla's assumption of imperial titles and attendance of rājās in his court doubtless indicate the political influence of Kāmarūpa over the neighbouring lands. There is no good ground for assuming that any portion of the kingdom was lost either in the east or in the west in North Bengal. The hold of Kāmarūpa in Bengal is proved by the land-grant in *Paṇḍarī*, made to a Brāhmaṇa of *Śāvathi* (*Śrāvasti*), which can be identified with at least a part of *Puṇḍravardhana*.[75] It may be mentioned in this

72. Gauhāti grant, V. 19.

73. *J.A.S.B.*, LXVI, I, pp. 120f. *Durjayā*, however, was not a separate town, nor was it a temporary place of residence of the rulers concerned. It stands for the old city of Prāgjyotiṣa, which was made fortified by raising new fortresses. The case was otherwise with Hārūppeśvara, which was never a permanent capital of Balavarman or any other king of the family.

74. B.K. Kākati, *App. to Cultural History of Assam*, I, pp. 205-206.

75. *K.S.*, pp. 130-45; K.L. Barua, *J.A.R.S.*, V, pp. 112-15.

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connection that about this time a *mahāmāṇḍalika* named Īśvaraghoṣa was ruling at *Ḍhekerī*, and he is said to have granted lands after taking his bath in the *Jaṭodā* river in the *Gālliṭipyaka viṣaya* of the *maṇḍala* of *Piyolla*. The *Kālikā Purāṇa* (51/87) states that *Jaṭodā* flows through Kāmarūpa, the western boundary of which was the river Karatoyā. But the river at present passes through Jalpāiguri and Koch Bihar. This shows that this region was within Kāmarūpa and Īśvaraghoṣa was probably a feudatory of Indrapāla.[76] This extension of the frontiers of Kāmarūpa probably accounts for the invasion of Jātavarman during the reign of his grandson Harṣapāla. It is wrong to assume, however, as done by some writers, that Vijayasena, who cannot be placed earlier than A. D. 1119, defeated Indrapāla. In any case, no loss of territory in *Puṇḍravardhana* is suggested by any evidence, and Vigrahapāla was no doubt a weak Gauḍa ruler, incapable of resisting the exploits of his eastern neighbour.

That Indrapāla defeated, no doubt by his invasion, a mighty king of *Vaṅga* is evident from v. 21 of the Gāchtal inscription of Gopāla. It is significantly mentioned that he defeated Kalyāṇa Chandra, son of Śrī Chandra of *Vaṅga* of the *Chandras*, who was the vanquisher of a king of *Gauḍa*. By this brilliant conquest Indrapāla extended the frontiers of his kingdom in the west to include major portion of modern Bengal. Another important event of his reign in his marriage alliance with the Rāṣṭrakūṭas (Gāchtal ins. v. 23) which was but his diplomatic triumph over his political rivals of *Gauḍa* and *Vaṅga*.

5. Gopāla :

Some writers doubt whether Indrapāla was succeeded by Gopāla. H. C. Ray holds that "it is impossible to decide whether Gopāla, if he really belonged to the line of Brahmapāla, was an immediate successor of Indrapāla".[77] The same view is held by N. N. Vasu.[78] But it is evident from the grants of Dharmapāla that Gopāla was the son and successor of Indrapāla: "Of him (Indrapāla) Gopāla was the son, who was matchless in might and a light of the royal family; he was meritorious, munificent, learned and accomplished with politeness.[79] That he was the son of Indrapāla and Rājyadevī, a princess of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa family, is clear from his own Gāchtal inscription (v. 23-24).

76. See *Struggle For Empire*,, V, pp. 42-45; *Social History of Kāmarūpa*, I, pp. 200f.
77. *D.H.N.I.*, I, p. 255.
78. *Social History of Kāmarūpa*, 1, p. 169.
79. Khonāmukhi grant, V. 8; Śubhaṅkarapāṭaka grant, V. 8.

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Gopāla may be placed between A. D. 1065-1085. The Puṣpabhadrā grant (v.4) describes him as possessing many virtues, and as one who had the knowledge of the *nītidharma* and whose power like fire burnt the kingdoms of his enemies. His recently discovered Gāchtal inscription throws new light not only on his own reign but also on those of his ancestors, beginning with Brahmapāla. By the grant land, measuring eight thousand measures of paddy, was granted in the village of Khārikoṇā Koñchī lying within the *viṣaya* of Bāḍāsojambubā. This *viṣaya* may be identified with the Bāḍā *viṣaya* of the Kamauli grant of Vaidyadeva and Bāḍāsepattan of the Uttarbarbil plates of Balavarman III. The name of the donee along with the boundaries of the land is not known, as these details may have been incorporated in the third plate which is missing. But the name of the writer of the *śāsana* (*praśasti*) was one Balabhadra.

The grant (vv 24-31) bears eloquent testimony to the king's personal charm, his good qualities, munificence and success in warfare. It is not unlikely that Gopāla consolidated the conquests, made by his father Indrapāla in *Puṇḍravardhana* by defeating the kings of *Vanga* and *Gauḍa*. This rising power of Kāmarūpa probably accounts for the subsequent invasion of Jātavarman.

6. Harṣapāla :

Gopāla was succeeded by his son Harṣapāla, whose pleasent character is the subject of more than one reference in *praśastis*. He "was a source of pleasure and praised by the wise. Being good natured (*Harṣapāla*), *Sarasvatī* enjoyed the nectar of pleasure caused by the long sustained friendship with *Lakṣmī*".[80] This indicates the prince's learning and prosperity in an equal degree. That he was a man of learnlearning and prosperity in an equal degree. That he was a man of learning, is also proved by another source. The *Kavīndra vacana samuccaya* credits him with the composition of a few verses.[81]

On the basis of our system of chronology, Harṣapāla may be placed between A. D. 1085-1095. Epigraphs refer to the defeat of his enemies in the battle-field. Even the "*rākṣasas* were terrified," the grant records, "by the split frontal globes of the foreheads of the elephants belonging to the enemies, as these thirsty elephants drank in a short span of time the profuse hot blood mixed with froth, on all sides of the

80. Khonāmukhi grant, V. 9; Śubhaṅkarapāṭaka grant, V. 9.
81. Ed. F. W. Thomas, pp. 47-48.

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battle-field".[82] It is possible that Harṣapāla became involved in a war with Jātavarman. The rising power of Kāmarūpa, as we have stated, was a cause of serious concern for the neighbouring powers, and Jātavarman may have attempted at regaining the lost possessions in Bengal. By the Belāva grant of Bhojavarman, to which we have already made a reference, Jātavarman snatched away a portion of the kingdom in *Puṇḍravardhana* ;[83] because by this grant, land was donated in that region. The statement in the grant, referring to Jātavarman's 'conquering the fortunes of Kamarupa,' may but be explained in that light. P. L. Paul is perhaps right in suggesting that Jātavarman came into conflict with either Gopāla or Harṣapāla,[84] we believe with the latter, for in all appearance, Harṣapāla was a weak king. The result was the loss of an important portion of the kingdom in *Puṇḍravardhana*. This was probably before Rāmapāla's rise to power in Gauḍa after the weak rule of Mahīpāla II and Śūrapala II, who ruled for a short period of four or five years or even less in the eighties of the 11th century A. D.[85]

At this time may have occurred also the invasion of the Chālukya Virkramāditya VI (1076-1126) or Bilhaṇa's Vikramāditya, who is said to have overrun *Magadha*, *Aṅga*, *Gauḍa* and *Kāmarūpa*.[86] If there is any historical basis for the far flung exploits, attributed to the conqueror, these could only have taken place when the Pālas were weak, and it is possible that Harṣapāla may have been involved in war with him,[87] somewhere in North Bengal or in the frontier of Kāmarūpa in the west; but it is unlikely that the raid resulted in the occupation of any land either in Gauḍa or in Kāmarūpa.[88] The story of so many Vikramādityas in ancient Indian history, almost all of them associated with Kāmarūpa in their exploits, which reached from one end of India to the other, may only be explained in terms of the ideal '*digvijayin*', having little historical reality or sometimes none at all. But the fact remains that during the time of Harṣapāla, Kāmarūpa underwent a contraction of her territory in the west, which as we shall see, was shortly re-acquired by his successors.

82. Khonāmukhi grant, V. 10; Śubhaṅkarapāṭaka grant, V. 10; Puṣpabhadrā grant, V. 5.
83. N. G. Majumdar, *Ins. of Bengal*, III, pp. 14f.
84. *I. C.*, VI, pp. 53-59.
85. See R.C. Majumdar, *J.P.A.S.B.*, (N.S.) 1921, pp. 1-6; D.C. Bhattacharya, *I.A.*, 1920, pp. 189-93; *I.H.Q.*, III, pp. 571-91.
86. *Vikramāṅkadevacarita*, *Chap.* III, *śloka*, 74.
87. *K.S.*, (Intro). p. 38; K.L. Barua, *E.H.K.*, p. 142.
88. Bühler, *Intro. to Vikramāṅkadevacarita*, pp. 23, 31.

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7. Dharmapāla—an accomplished king :

With Dharmapāla's accession , the kingdom again regained her lost prestige. Being peaceful at home and warlike abroad, Dharmapāla not only established a reign of virtue within the kingdom but also extended the bounds of Kāmarūpa by conquering the lost possessions in North Bengal, and probably towards the sea in the south-west of the kingdom. This is shown by his own grants. He "was the lord of the earth girdled by the ocean : (*ambudhi-mekhalayā*).— In the battle-field, decorated with flowerlike pearls, struck off from the heads of elephants, killed by the blows of the sword, that king alone remained victorious.— Who alone made this earth to be governed by one king, and who was the only shelter of the refugees, whose fame was well-known throughout the world, and who was the vanquisher of enemy heroes".[89]

In view of his eventful reign, Dharmapāla may be placed between A. D. 1095-1120.[90] He was probably the contemporary of the Gauḍa ruler Rāmapāla, the period of whose reign is, however, a matter of great dispute. While some writers ascribe for him A. D. 1057-1102,[91] others place him between 1069-1111 or 1078-1120,[92] and 1077-1119.[93] The most reasonable date for Rāmapāla appears to be the last quarter of the 11th and the beginning of the 12th century A. D.[94]

Dharmapāla's conquest in Bengal, as we shall show presently, was achieved just after his accession. His Khonāmukhi grant was issued in the first year of his reign, or about A. D. 1095-96. The land was donated in the hamlet of *Meru* adjoining *Dighalaṇḍi* in the *viṣaya* of *Pūraji*. This indicates the supremacy of the king over the region, inhabited mostly by tribal people. The names of the village and the *viṣaya* also appear to be Austric and Boḍo in origin.[95] The Śubhaṅkarapāṭaka grant was issued in the second year of his reign about A. D. 1096-97, and the land was donated in *Kañjiā* within *Dijjinā viṣaya*. These names are also of Austric origin,[96] suggesting that during the time of the grant, these places were inhabited by non-Aryans, among whom *agrahāras*

89. Khonāmukhi grant, VV 12-14; Śubhaṅkarapāṭaka grant, VV 12-14.
90. Bhattacharya (*K.S.*, pp. 149-50) places him in the early part of the 12th century A.D.
91. R.D. Banerji, *M.A.S.B.*, V, pp. 43-113; *J.B.O.R.S.*, 1928, pp. 489-538.
92. D.C. Bhattacharya, *I.A.*, 1920, pp. 189-93; *I.H.Q.*, III, pp. 571-91.
93. Majumdar, *J.P.A.S.B.*, (N.S.) 1921, pp. 1-6.
94. Smith places Rāmapāla during the 12th century A.D. (*E.H.I.*, pp. 366f).
95. B.K. Kākati, *App. to Cultural History of Assam*, I, p. 207.
96. *Ibid*, p. 206.

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were created for Brāhmaṇas. As the land was donated in the *Dijjinā viṣaya*, identified with modern Dinājpur in North Bengal,[97] and to a Brāhmaṇa of *Krosañja*[98] in *Śrāvasti*, it appears that both *Dijjinā* and *Śrāvasti* lay within Kāmarūpa, at a time when Rāmapāla of Gauḍa had not yet launched his career of conquests. *Śāvathi* of the Guākuchi grant of Indrapāla and *Krosañja* of the Śubhaṅkarapāṭaka grant have been located in *Puṇḍravardhana* and Dinājpur in Bengal.[99] *Śrāvasti* also finds mention in the inscription of the Brāhmaṇa Prahāsa, wherein Jayapāla of Kāmarūpa is said to have offered him a *tulāpuruṣa* gift of 900 gold coins.[100] This Brāhmaṇa was from *Bālagrāma* in *Puṇḍra*, and he was also associated with a place called *Tarkkāri* in *Śrāvasti*, which is located by N. G. Majumdar in Madhyadeśa.[101] In the opinion of J. C. Ghosh, *Tarkkāri-Śrāvasti* was not in Madhyadeśa but in *Puṇḍra*.[102] R. G. Basak locates *Bālagrāma*, *Tarkkāri* and *Śrāvasti* in Bengal or Gauḍa.[103] P. Bhattacharya contends that *Śrāvasti* was in Kāmarūpa. He disputes Basak's location of the place in Gauḍa. It appears, he adds, that Prahāsa went to *Bālagrāma* in *Puṇḍra* from *Tarkkāri* in *Śravasti*. It is true, he admits, that *Śrāvasti* lay near the western part of Kāmarūpa lying to the east of *Puṇḍra; Dijjinā viṣaya*, in which Śubhaṅkara lay, was also to the western side of Kāmarūpa, and Śilimpur, where the grant was found, also lay to the west of the *Karatoyā*.[104]

Whatever the exact location of *Śrāvasti*, it is evident that it lay in North Bengal or within *Puṇḍravardhana* and the *Dijjinā viṣaya* was in modern Dinājpur. It appears, therefore, that both *Dijjinā* and *Śrāvasti* lay in the neighbourhood of *Chandrapurī viṣaya* near Dinājpur, where Bhūtivarman donated lands. Vanamāla donated lands almost in the same area to the west of the Teestā-*Karatoyā*. The Kāmarūpa rulers cast covetous eyes upon the whole of *Puṇḍravardhana*, and they were responsible for the creation of *agrahāras* in that region for the spread of Brāhmaṇical culture. The evidence supports the view that after the temporary loss of *Puṇḍravardhana* during the time of Harṣapāla, Dharmapāla just after his accession, acquired the region, possibly from the hands of some minor chief in North Bengal or from

97. P. Bhattacharya, *J.A.R.S.*, II, pp. 82-84.
98. This place is also of Austric origin : (Kākati, *App. to Cultural History of Assam*, I, pp. 206-7).
99. *J.A.R.S.*, II, pp. 82-84.
100. *E.I.*, XIII, p. 289.
101. *I.A.*, XLVIII, pp. 209-31.
102. *I.A.*, LX, pp. 14-18.
103. *E.I.*, XIII, pp. 289-95.
104. *K.S.*, pp. 164f.

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Rāmapāla himself, and granted lands as a mark of his victory. The conquest of the regions 'girdled by the ocean', may point to the spread of Dharmapāla's influence towards south-east Bengal adjoining the sea. The successors of Jātavarman prior to the rise of Bhojavarman in East Bengal were weak rulers,[105] and it is probable that Dharmapāla established his supremacy over them to push the frontiers of Kāmarūpa towards the sea. Bhojavarman may have come into prominence during the second quarter of the 12th century A. D., and it was about that time that he donated lands in *Puṇḍravardhana*, as proved by his *Belāva* grant[106] Therefore, the hold of Kāmarūpa over this region probably continued until the time of the successor of Dharmapāla. In any case, Dharmapāla succeeded in pushing back the boundary of Kāmarūpa again to the west of *Karatoyā* and there is nothing to show, as P. Bhattacharya believes, that Dharmapāla was troubled by his enemies or became anxious about an impending invasion.[107]

While in his early grants, Dharmapāla was ruling from Prāgjyotiṣapura, in the Puṣpabhadrā grant, (v 20) issued towards the end of his reign, he is said to have ruled from *Kāmarūpanagara*, though in the seal occurs the epithet, '*Prāgjyotiṣādhipati*', referring perhaps to the kingdom. There is a controversy about the location of *Kāmarūpanagara*. N. N. Vasu places it in Rangpur and holds that the change of the capital was due to two causes: the Shān and other non-Aryan tribes became powerful in the east and thereatened Prāgjyotiṣa, while in the west Gauḍa was subjected to repeated invasions, and the rulers of Kāmarūpa were compelled to shift the capial to the west in order to defend their kingdom from the attack of the invaders.[108] But, the Shāns invaded Assam only in the beginning of the 13th century A. D. What is more improbable, Vasu, basing his statement on a tradition of Rangpur, asserts that Dharmapāla was defeated by one Mayanā on the bank of the Teestā.[109] The capital, as we shall show, was not shifted to *Kamatā* from Prāgjyotiṣa or its neighbourhood before the middle of the 13th century A. D. The donation of lands in *Śrāvasti*, or the liberality shown by Dharmapāla and his successor to the people living there, scarcely proves the change of the capital to a *Kāmarūpanagara* somewhere in North Bengal lying close to *Śrāvasti*, as asserted by P. Bhattacharya.[110]

105. See Majumdar, *History of Bengal*, I, pp. 197-204.
106. *E.I.*, XII, pp. 37-44.
107. *K.S.*, p. 164.
108. *Social History of Kāmarūpa*, 1, 174.
109. *Ibid*, pp. 173-74.
110. *J.A.R.S.*, II, pp. 82-84.

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The same writer opines that the capital might have been changed from *Durjayā* to *Kāmarūpanagara* even before Dharmapāla ; for otherwise, he holds, the name *Durjayā* and the *Lauhitya* would have been mentioned in Dharmapāla's Śubhaṅkarapāṭaka grant. Though his kingdom extended to the *Karatoyā*, Bhattacharya adds, the capital had to be shifted from the region of the Brahmaputra in order to cope with the invasion of powerful enemies from Bengal. He therefore, identifies the capital with *Kamatā*. Speaking of the ruins of *Kamatāpura*,[111] as described by Buchanan Hamilton, Bhattacharya holds that a temple of Kāmākhyā was establsihed by Indrapāla in *Kamatā*.[112] But, there is no basis for such an assumption. It is, however, true that the Muslim writers speak of Kāmarūpa and *Kamatā* sometimes as synonymous and sometimes as two kingdoms.[113] It is also true that they called Kāmarūpa, *Kāmru* and *Kāmrūd*, and used this name as synonymous with *Kamatā*. Even in the Chinese records Kāmarūpa is called *Kamelu*. [114] In the Dharmaṅgala of Ghanarāma, Kāmarūpa is also called *Kaṅgur*, which may be an abbreviation of Kamatāpura.[114a] But Kāmarūpa or *Kāmru*, a region, cannot be identified with *Kāmarūpanagara*, a city. When Minhāj wrote his *Tabaqāt-i-Nāsirī*, *Kamatā* or *Kamatāpura* was not known, but Kāmarūpa was known as *Kāmrūd*, and its ruler as '*Rae of Kāmrūd*'.[115] The author of Riyāz and the later Muslim historians mention *Kāmru* and *Kamatā* together, because the seat of government was then at *Kamatā* or *Kamatāpura*. That the capital lay in the neighbourhood of Gauhāti, is proved by the Muslim invasions. Bakhtiyar in A.D. 1205-6 came up to Gauhāti and the event is recorded not only in the *Tabaqāt-i-Nāsirī* but also in a Rock Inscription at North Gauhāti.[116] The subsequent invasions of Ghiāsuddīn Iwaz in A.D. 1226 and Ikhtiyar-Uddīn Yuzbak Tughril Khān of A.D. 1256 probably also reached Gauhāti, since their coins have been found there. [117] This seems to indicate that even during the middle of the 13th century A.D., the capital of the kingdom was at or near Gauhāti, not to speak of

111. also Hunter, *Statistical Account of Koch Bihar*, pp. 368-69.
112. *K.S.*, (Intro), pp. 28-32.
113. Gait, *History of Assam*, pp. 42-43.
114. Watters, II, pp. 185f.
114a. It is interesting to note that *Kahgyur* and *Tangyur* represent Buddhist works of the same names, said to have been compiled in Tibet, and at least a portion of Kāmarūpa was also known as *Tangyur*. This, in any case, proves that Tibet and Kāmarūpa for a considerable period of time held very close cultural contact, living testimony of which is the *Hayagrīva* temple of Hājo.
115. Raverty, I, pp. 560f.
116. *K.S.*, (Intro), p. 44.
117. *J.P.A.S.B.*, (N.S.) VI, pp. 621-22.

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a century earlier. The ruins of Rangpur or *Kamatā*, ascribed to one Dharmapāla of traditions, [118] can hardly be identified with those of *Kāmarūpanagara* of Dharmapāla of the Puṣpabhadrā grant. Therefore, the city of *Kāmrūd* of the Muslim writers, to which the invaders advanced, can reasonably be identified with a place in North Gauhāti, just opposite Prāgjyotiṣapura or Gauhāti. The extensive ruins of fortifications, temples and roads which may be ascribed to a period not later than A.D. 1100-1200, may have been the relics of a Pāla capital there during Dharmapāla's reign. This is in consonance with a tradition that a king of the name of Dharmapāla had a seat of government there. The eastern portion of North Gauhāti is still known as *Rājduār* (royal palace), indicating that the king's palace was there. The find-spot of the Puṣpabhadrā grant is *Rājmahal*, near the capital. It is, therefore, evident that *Kāmarūpanagara* was at North Gauhati, which remained the capital until the latter part of the 13th century A.D., after which, with the foundation of a new dynasty, it was shifted to *Kamatā*.[119] It is also certain that the old city of Prāgjyotiṣa was not abandoned. *Kāmarūpanagara* of the grant was but an extension of the old capital to the northern bank of the Brahmaputra which must have been established as a defensive measure, and Dharmapāla and his successors remained the lords of Prāgjyotiṣa.[120]

After the consolidation of his conquests, Dharmapāla devoted himself to the spread of religion and learning. As indicated by his Puṣpabhadrā grant, (v 6,7) he became a propagator of the *Dharma* (*Vajrayāna*) and he was not only a patron of religion but also a poet. The first eight verses of the said grant were written by him, who was "the sun of the Pāla family, the crown-jewel of poets, the abode of all arts, the possessor of all virtues, pure and virtuous".[121] The *Sadukti Karṇāmṛta* of Śrīdharadāsa contains ten verses, attributed to Dharmapāla.[122] The patronage of and the liberality shown towards the Brāhmaṇas are attested by his grants. With a well-furnished treasury, a systematic administrative machinery, and a vigorous foreign policy, he extended the bounds of Kāmarūpa and restored peace and order, and thus proved himself as one of the last

118. *J.A.S.B.*, 1893, p. 273.
119. K.L. Barua, *E.H.K.*, pp. 146-47.
120. The identification of *Kāmarūpanagara* with modern Kāmpur in Nowgong by R.M. Nath, is simply impossible : (*The Back-ground of Assamese Culture*, pp. 46-47).
121. Puṣpabhadrā grant, V. 8.
122. E. Rāmavatāra Śarmā (Punjab Oriental Series, XV, No. 162), 1933, Intro, p. 63. The said work may have been compiled in about A.D. 1205: (A.A. Macdonell, *History of Sanskrit Literature*, p. 379).

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great rulers of Kāmarūpa. He really justified his claim as the protector of *dharma*, *artha* and *kāma*.[123]

8. Jayapāla—the last known ruler of the family : Period of Vaidyadeva :

The genealogy of the Pāla rulers, as given in the grants, ends with Dharmapāla, whose successor is, therefore, unknown. N. N. Vasu, on the basis of a Rangpur tradition, asserts that Dharmapāla was succeeded by his son, Bhavachandra, and the sovereignty of the family slipped away from the time of this king and his minister Gavachandra.[124] But there is nothing to prove that Dharmapāla had such a son. This Dharmapāla of traditions and his reputed son may in fact have belonged to entirely different lines.

A Kāmarūpa *nṛpati* of the name of Jayapāla[123a] is, however, mentioned in a Śilimpur stone slab inscription, the object of which was to record the erection of a temple wherein a Brāhmaṇa, named Prahāsa built an image of Amaranātha. The inscription was found in the Śilimpur mouzā of Kethāl thānā of the district of Bogra. It mentions a *tulāpuruṣa* gift, made to that Brāhmaṇa by Jayapāla. "Though excessively solicited", the epigraph records, "he (Prahāsa) did not by any means accept nine hundred gold coins and a *śāsana*, (a grant of land) yielding an income of a thousand (coins) from Jayapāladeva, the king of Kāmarūpa, of unimaginable glory, while (the latter was) making a *tulāpuruṣa* gift".[125] In spite of this explicit reference, the identification of Jayapāla as the ruler of Kāmarūpa is disputed. D. N. Mukherjee's identification of this prince with Jayapāla, the cousin of Devapāla of Gauḍa, [126] is chronologically impossible, as Jayapāla of Gauḍa flourished during the 9th century A. D. and the script of the inscription is much later. The name also occurs in the *Chandoga Pariśiṣṭa Prakāśa*, where a Jayapāla is said to have made the donaton of a '*Mahāśrāddha*' to Umāpati, the chief of *paṇḍitas*.[127] This Umāpati lived in the early part of the 12th century A. D. during the time of Vijayasena. Paṇḍit H. P. Śāstrī in his introduction to *Rāmacarita* makes mention of this Jayapāla, whom he identifies with the cousin of Devapāla;[128] this again is chronologically

123. Śubhaṅkarapāṭaka grant, V 12.

123a. See P. C. Choudhury: 'Kāmarūpanṛpati Jayapāladeva,' *J. A. R. S.*, XIII, pp. 27-33, for a detailed treatment of his reign.

124. *Social History of Kāmarūpa*, I, pp. 174-75.

125. *E.I.*, XIII, (V 22), pp. 289-95.

126. *I.C.*, V, pp. 367-74.

127. J. Eggeling, *Cat. of Sanskrit Mss. in the India Office Library*, London, I, p. 925.

128. *M.A.S.B.*, III, p. 8; also R.D. Banerji, *Ibid*, V, p. 58.

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impossible, for, as we have shown, Devapāla could not have flourished later than the 9th century A. D. There is no mention of Jayapāla either as a ruler of Gauḍa, or as a cousin of Devapāla. R. G. Basak, the editor of the Śilimpur epigraph, rightly identifies Jayapāla of the inscription and Jayapāla of the work as a king of Kāmarūpa.[129] P. Bhattacharya holds the same view, and makes Jayapāla either the son or the grandson of Dharmapāla.[130] It is, therefore, almost certain that Jayapāla of the epigraph was the same person as Jayapāla of the verse, and no other than the Kāmarūpa *nṛpati*. H.C. Ray rightly points out that Jayapāla of the inscription cannot be identified with the cousin of Devapāla. In view of the proximity of the find-spot of the epigraph to the frontier of Kāmarūpa and the similarity of its characters to those of the Pālas of Kāmarūpa, it will be reasonable, Ray holds, to take Jayapāla as belonging to that line.[131] If the chronicles of Assam are to be relied upon, he may be identified with Rāmacandra.

The next important question to be decided is Jayapāla's position in the Pāla group of princes. Basak places him, without sufficient reason, somewhere after Indrapāla.[132] Ray is not certain whether Jayapāla should come before or after the Gopāla—Dharmapāla group.[133] But the genealogy of the Pāla line, as given in the grants, shows that he has no place, at least in direct succession, before Dharmapāla. The existing sources also do not support the view that he belonged to a collateral family of the Pālas. The fact that he is mentioned as a Kāmarūpa *nṛpati* seems to prove that he was not a feudatory *rājā*, but must have ruled from the central city of Prāgjyotiṣa. If Jayapāla's identification with Rāmacandra of the Assamese chronicles may be accepted, it appears almost certain that he was the successor of Dharmapāla and most likely his son. His date of accession may, therefore, be placed about A. D. 1120.

The location of the land, granted to Prahāsa in *Śrāvasti* in *Puṇḍravardhana*, to which we have already referred, proves that Jayapāla's sway reached North Bengal. It was not a new conquest, but one which had been made by Dharmapāla about two decades earlier. This epigraph proves that from about A. D. 1096-97 until the accession of Jayapāla or sometime later than A.D. 1120 *Puṇḍravardhana* remained under Kāmarūpa.

129. *E.I.*, XIII, pp. 289-95.
130. *K.S.*, (Intro.), pp. 24, (f.n. 5) , 36-37; also *I.A.*, XV, pp. 304-10; *J.A.R.S.*, III, pp. 21-22.
131. *D.H.N.I.*, I, p. 255.
132. *E.I.*, XIII, pp. 289f.
133. *D.H.N.I.*, I, p. 256.

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The extension of the frontiers of Kāmarūpa to North Bengal, and the frequent bid for supremacy by her rulers since the decline of the Guptas, resulted in a traditional rivalry between Gauḍa and Kāmarūpa. So long as there were strong rulers in Kāmarūpa, Gauḍa rulers could not push back the western boundary of the former from Bengal. The minor chiefs, who occasionally became prominent either in North or East Bengal, had to give way after a short period to any conqueror. But now Gauḍa was in the ascendant under Rāmapāla, and the time had come when Kāmarūpa had to bear the full weight of the Gauḍa army. This perhaps accounts for the invasion of Māyana, the general of Rāmapāla, as described in the *Rāmacarita* of Sandhyākaranandī. Though the text refers to the conquest of Kāmarūpa by Māyana,[134] R. C. Majumdar thinks that Kāmarūpa was conquered not by Māyana, which he takes to be a misreading, but either by Jayapāla or Tiṅgyadeva during the reign of Dharmapāla of Kāmarūpa.[135] But it is distinctly stated that the invader was Māyana; we shall show that the contemporary king of Kāmarūpa was Jayapāla himself. R. D. Banerji holds that Māyana conquered Kāmarūpa in about A. D. 1095 and that Rāmapāla was succeeded by Kumārapāla in A. D. 1097.[136] But, only his own system of chronology makes Kumārapāla ascend the throne about that date. N. N. Vasu contends that during the weak reign of Bhavachandra, son of Dharmapāla, the entire land from *Kamatā* to Kāmarūpa was lost, and this region was conquered by Rāmapāla.[137] But the tradition on which his surmise is based, lacks confirmation. P. Bhattacharya asserts that the invasion took place about A. D. 1094-95 during Dharmapāla's reign, and this resulted in the occupation of only the south-western portion of Kāmarūpa, over which Tiṅgyadeva and Vaidyadeva ruled one after another, while Dharmapāla was ruling over the eastern part. Vaidyadeva, according to Bhattacharya, was the contemporary of Dharmapāla. Bhattacharya, therefore, contends that there was a division of the kingdom after Māyana's conquest, the vassals of Gauḍa ruling over the western part and Dharmapāla and his successor ruling over the eastern.[138] This theory seems to have been contradicted by Bhattacharya himself by the fact that he has dated the accession of Dharmapāla and placed the Śubhaṅkarapāṭaka grant, by which lands were donated by that ruler, in *Śrāvasti* in the last decade of the eleventh century A.D.[139] The grants

134. *M.A.S.B.*, V, pp. 92f; H.P. Śāstrī, *M.A.S.B.*, III, pp. 1-57.
135. *History of Bengal*, I, pp. 160-61.
136. *M.A.S.B.*, V, pp. 92f.
137. *Social History of Kāmarūpa*, I, p. 215.
138. *K.S.*, (Intro), pp. 40f, 145.
139. *Ibid*, (Intro), p. 41, (f.n. 4).

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of Dharmapāla do not give us any ground for suspicion that any portion of Kāmarūpa was lost in Bengal until after the accession of Jayapāla in about A. D. 1120.

We have examined the date of Rāmapāla, who may reasonably be placed between A. D. 1085-1130.[140] Jayapāla made his offer to Prahāsa in *Śrāvasti* between A. D. 1120-25, and the overthrow of this prince may be placed towards the end of the reign of Rāmapāla about A. D. 1125-1130. It is rightly pointed out by P. Bhattacharya, on the basis of *Chandoga Pariśiṣṭa Prakāśa*, that Umāpati and Jayapāla flourished even during the second quarter of the 12th century A.D.,[141] but perhaps not later than A. D. 1138. This last date of Jayapāla seems to be confirmed by the Kamauli grant of Vaidyadeva (A. D. 1142), issued by him in the fourth year of his reign, i. e., in about A. D. 1138. By this grant Vaidyadeva claims to have donated lands in Prāgjyotiṣa,[142] indicating that in about 1138 he was the ruler of Kāmarūpa. The grant proves that Vaidyadeva was established by Kumārapāla, when the former suppressed the rebellion of Tiṅgyadeva, who was placed as a vassal of Rāmapāla over the western portion of Kāmarūpa in North Bengal. Tiṅgyadeva was the contemporary of Rāmapāla, as was Vaidyadeva of Kumārapāla, who had a very short reign. Kumārapāla is dated differently by different writers. R. D. Banerji places him between A. D. 1097-1103;[143] R. C. Majumdar, 1120-25[144] and D. C. Bhattacharya between 1111-1115 or 1120-32.[145] The most likely date appears to be A. D. 1130-35 which was also the date of Tiṅgyadeva. Hence the invasion of Kāmarūpa during the reign of Jayapāla may reasonably be placed between A. D. 1125-30. It is not possible to place Vaidyadeva in A. D. 1096, as done by D. C. Bhattacharya.[146] It is equally wrong to place the invasion of Māyana towards the end of the 11th century A. D., during Dharmapāla's reign, and evolve a theory of the division of Kāmarūpa at this time, as done by P. Bhattacharya. He himself has placed the reign of Dharmapāla during the first part of the 12th century A. D.[147] The donee of the Śubhaṅkarapāṭaka grant, as we

140. H.C. Raychaudhuri (*Studies in Indian Antiquities*, pp. 157-58), places him towards the end of the 11th and the beginning of the 12th century A.D.

141. *J.A.R.S.*, III, pp. 21-22.

142. A. Venis, *E.I.*, II, p. 347-58.

143. *J.B.O.R.S.*, 1928, pp. 489-538; *M.A.S.B*,. V, pp. 43-113; *Bāṅglāra Itihāsa*, I, p. 283.

144. *J.P.A.S.B.*, 1921 (N.S.), pp. 1-6.

145. *I.A.*, 1920, pp. 189-93; *I.H.Q.*, III, pp. 571-91.

146. *I.A.*, 1920, pp. 189-93; *I.H.Q.*, III, pp. 571-91.

147. *K.S.*, pp. 149-50.

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have noted, hailed from *Śrāvasti* in *Puṇḍra* and the land was donated in *Dijjinā* (Dinājpur); Bhattacharya has admitted that Kāmarūpa at that time extended up to that region.[148] If by the suggested date of that grant (A. D. 1095) Dharmapāla was dispossessed of the western part of the kingdom, which contained *Kāmarūpanagara*, how are we to explain that the Puṣpabhadrā grant of the end of his reign was issued from the same capital ? So the theory of the division of the kingdom between Tiṅgyadeva-Vaidyadeva and Dharmapāla-Jayapāla is not supported by any genuine evidence. Bhattacharya's theory is probably based on the assumption that Dharmapāla had his capital at *Kamatā* in North Bengal; but we have shown that it was at North Gauhāti.

It is equally wrong to conjecture, as done by K. L. Barua, that the whole of Kāmarūpa was conquered by Māyana from the hands of Jayapāla, and that Tiṅgyadeva was placed as a vassal in the central city of *Kāmarūpanagara* or Prāgjyotiṣa.[149] As we have noted, Māyana's invasion resulted only in the loss of Kāmarūpa possessions in Bengal, over which Tiṅgyadeva was placed as a vassal. It was Vaidyadeva who completed his conquests. His Kamauli grant records the grant of two villages of *Śāntipāṭaka* and *Mandarā* situated in the *viṣaya* of *Bāḍā* in *Kāmarūpa maṇḍala*, in the *bhukti* of *Prāgjyotiṣa* : (*Śrī- Prāgjyotiṣa-bhuktau Kāmarūpa-maṇḍale Bāḍā-viṣaye*).[150] The reference here is confusing in that, while Kāmarūpa was the name of the kingdom under Jayapāla, it is called a *maṇḍala* in the grant, and Prāgjyotiṣa, the capital city, a *bhukti*. The latter here stands possibly for the home province, and Vaidyadeva was yet to establish his position over the rest of the kingdom. It is significant again that Tiṅgyadeva is not mentioned as a ruler of Kāmarūpa, but simply called a prince ruling over the region to the east of the Pāla dominion. As the record states, when Tiṅgyadeva rebelled, Vaidyadeva was sent by Kumārapāla to suppress his revolt, and Vaidyadeva, with his brother Buddhadeva's help, succeeded in killing Tiṅgyadeva. Soon after this event Vaidyadeva declared his independence and, as proved by his grant, as early as A.D. 1138 he assumed the imperial title of '*Mahārājādhirāja- Parameśvara-Paramabhaṭṭāraka*, indicating his independence of the Pālas of both Kāmarūpa and Gauḍa. It is not known when Vaidyadeva conquered the rest of Kāmarūpa in the east, where Jayapāla was still ruling as an independent king. But Vaidyadeva issued his grant from *Haṅsakoñcī* and

148. *K.S.*, p. 167.
149. *E.H.K.*, pp. 147-48, 194.
150. *E.I.*, II, pp. 347-58, (lines 48-49).

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made the donation of two villages in the heart of Kāmarūpa.[151] It is suggested by Paṇḍit Bhattacharya that it was as a result of his victory over Jayapāla that Vaidyadeva donated lands by A. D. 1138.[152] But, this ought to have been mentioned in the grant. So in the absence of any reference to the conflict between Vaidyadeva and Jayapāla, it is safe to suggest that Jayapāla did not go to war with Vaidyadeva. In any case, the conquest of Kāmarūpa by Vaidyadeva was complete by A. D. 1138 and, therefore, the last date of Jayapāla cannot be placed after that.

To conclude, it was Jayapāla who was defeated by Māyana between A. D. 1125-30 and as a result, the possessions of Kāmarūpa in Bengal were ceded to the Pālas of Gauḍa and over them Tiṅgyadeva was placed as a vassal; when he revolted, during Kumārapāla's reign, Vaidyadeva killed him and subsequently declared his independence. He then made fresh conquests in the eastern portion of Kāmarūpa and began to rule over the major part or the whole of the kingdom from and after A. D. 1138, about which date the Pāla family of Kāmarūpa became extinct.[153] If this sequence of events and the chronology be correct, Jayapāla ruled between A. D. 1120-1138 as the contemporary of both Rāmapāla and Kumārapāla, and Tiṅgyadeva and Vaidyadeva. That Jayapāla was the last Pāla ruler is also indicated by our chronicles, according to which he was no other than Rāmacandra. Vaidyadeva established a new line, and was known as Ārimatta, who is credited by the chronicles with the erection of many fortifications, not only in modern Kāmarūpa, but also in Viśvanāth and Ratnapura in Mājuli in Upper Assam.[154] This also proves that Vaidyadeva established himself as the ruler of the whole of Kāmarūpa after Jayapāla.

(i) The supposed invasion of Kāmarūpa by the Senas of Bengal :

The next important question to be decided is the supposed connection between Kāmarūpa and the Senas of Bengal. The Deopārā epigraph of Vijayasena states that "he (Vijayasena) impetuously assailed the lord of

151. K.L. Barua's location of the villages in the present Barpeṭā subdivision, Kāmarūpa appears tenable (*J.A.R.S.*, II, p. 87).

152. *J.A.R.S.*, III, pp. 21-22.

153. The contention of P. Bhattacharya, supported by K.L. Barua, that Jayapāla defeated Vaidyadeva in a war when the latter invaded Kāmarūpa and issued his grant and even pursued him to his own territory, is not at all probable : (*J.A.R.S.*, III, pp. 21-23 (f.n.); *J.A.R.S.*, I, No. 2)

154. A. Bhattacharya, *J.A.R.S.*, III, pp. 12f.

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Gauḍa, put down the prince of Kāmarūpa and conquered Kaliṅga"[155] The next important mention is made by the Mādhāinagar grant of Lakṣmaṇasena, which states that he "subdued Kāmarūpa."[156] The question to be decided is, who were the contemporary rulers of Kāmarūpa ? This will depend on the date of the Sena rulers of Bengal. Kielhorn places the grant of Vijayasena towards the end of the 11th century A.D., and ascribing him to the beginning of the last quarter of the 11th century A.D., makes Lakṣmaṇa the founder of the era beginning with A.D. 1119; [157] but in another place, he ascribes for Vallālasena, the father of Lakṣmaṇa, A.D. 1169.[158] R.D. Banerji, editing the grant of Lakṣmaṇasena, holds that his date falls in 1119 when Lakṣmaṇa conquered Kāmarūpa. [159] The acual interpretation of both the grants will show that while Vijaya put down the prince of Kāmarūpa, Lakṣmaṇa only subdued the kingdom. It is unlikely that Kāmarūpa was conquered and ceded to their kingdom.[160]H.C. Raychaudhuri, referring to the invasion of Vijayasena, remarks that "during the weak rule of the sons of Rāmapāla, the kinglets of the Gauḍa empire who helped to regain his throne, engaged in a struggle for supremacy, in the course of which, *Vīra*, *Vajardhana*, the *rājā* of Kāmarūpa and the lord of *Gauḍa* himself were worsted and Vijayasena established the supremacy of his family." [161] P. Bhattacharya explains the conflict on a theory of the annexation of the western part of Kāmarūpa leading to the invasion, and further adds that the invasions took place in the reign of either the son or the grandson of Dharmapāla, i.e., during the time of either Jayapāla or his successor. On this theory, Bhattacharya places Vijayasena during the middle of the 12th century A.D.[162] But this has been disproved by his own chronology. If Vijaya flourished, as he claims, in about A.D. 1159-69, how can it be feasible that Jayapāla, whose last date connot be far removed from A.D. 1135 or 1138, could be affected by the invasion ? The successor of Jayapāla is yet to be found, if he was not Vaidyadeva himself. To make confusion worse confounded, Bhattacharya thinks that Jayapāla's kingdom was again invaded by Lakṣmaṇasena, whom he places towards the end of the 12th century A.D. [163] If Jayapāla was affected by any of these invasions, they will have to be ascribed to a date

155. *E.I.*, I, p. 305 (V 20); also *Inscriptions of Bengal*, Vol. III, pp. 48-56.
156. *J.A.S.B.*, V (N.S.), pp. 467-476, (line 32); also *Inscriptions of Bengal*, III, p. 111.
157. *E.I.*, I, p. 305.
158. *E.I.*, VIII, (App. A), p. 20.
159. *J.A.S.B.*, V (N.S.), pp. 467-76; *M.A.S.B.*, V, pp. 43-113.
160. See R.C. Majumdar, *History of Bengal*, I, pp. 213f.
161. *Studies in Indian Antiquities*, pp. 157-58.
162. *K.S.*, (Intro), p. 42, (f.n. 3) and p. 43.
163. *Ibid*, pp. 37, 43.

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earlier than A.D. 1138, which is impossible. Prinsep gives the dates of Vijaya—A.D. 1063; Vallāla—1066 and Lakṣmaṇa—1116 only. [164] R.L. Mitra supports him and gives the dates as follows: Vijaya—A.D. 1046; Vallāla—1056 and Lakṣmaṇa—1106. [165] Cunningham's chronology is: Vijaya—A.D. 1025; Vallāla—1050 and Lakṣmaṇa—1076. [166] V. Smith ascribes the foundation of the Sena dynasty to A.D. 1060. [167] All these dates are no longer tenable in the light of the Muslim records and a number of works, the authorship of some of which, like the *Dānasāgara* and the *Adbhūtasāgara*, is attributed to Vallālasena. Though there are writers like R.D. Banerji who disbelieve in the reliability of the dates contained therein, their authenticity has been proved by others like R.C. Majumdar, [168] H.C.Raychaudhuri, D.C. Bhattacharya, N.N. Vasu and others. *Dānasāgara* was written in the S.E. 1091 (A.D. 1169) and *Adbhūtasāgara* in 1082 (A.D. 1160) when Vallāla was alive. R.C. Majumdar, on the basis of these dates, holds that the date A.D. 1118-19, taken to be the era started by Lakṣmaṇa, as believed by Banerji, was not actually such, and maintains that he might have come to the throne many years later than that date. He places, therefore, Vijaya's date of accession in A.D. 1118-19; Vallāla in 1159 and Lakṣmaṇa in 1175.[169] D.C. Bhattacharya, on the basis of the same works, gives the dates as follows: Vijaya—A.D. 1096-1157; Vallāla—1157-1170 and Lakṣmaṇa—1170-1200. He takes A.D. 1119 as the date of Lakṣmaṇa's birth. [170] The period for Vijaya appears to be too long and it is yet to be proved that the date 1119 was the birth date of Lakṣmaṇa. As H.C. Raychaudhuri points out, the so-called Lakṣmaṇa era beginning with A.D. 1119 was not started by Lakṣmaṇasena, son of Vallāla, as the theory is opposed to the evidence of the works of Vallāla and the *Tabaqāt-i-Nāsirī* of Minhāj who wrote his work in A.H. 658 (A.D. 1260). The two works of Vallāla prove that he was alive in A.D. 1168-69 and, therefore, his son could not have ascended the throne before that date. The work of Minhāj further proves that Lakṣmaṇa was ruling in Bengal at the time of the Nadiā raid of Bakhtiyar which took place after A.H. 589 and before A.H. 601, i.e., between A.D. 1193-1205.[171] But it is difficult to decide whether the date A.D. 1169 of Vallāla refers to the beginning or the end of his reign. In any case, it appears that his connection with the

164. *J.A.S.B.*, 1838, I, p. 41; also *I.A.*, II, p. 272.
165. *J.A.S.B.*, XXXIV, I, p. 128; XLVII, I, p. 396; *Indo-Aryans*, II, p. 262.
166. *A.S. Rep.*, XV, p. 158.
167. *E.H.I.*, pp. 367f.
168. *J.P.A.S.B.*, 1920, (N.S.) pp. 301-313.
169. *J.P.A.S.B.*, 1921, (N.S.), pp. 7-16; *History of Bengal*, I, p. 231.
170. *I.A.*, 1922, pp. 145-148, 153-58; *I.H.Q.*, III. pp. 571-91
171. *Ashutosh Mukherjee Silver Jubilee Volume*, II, pp. 4-5.

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so-called Lakṣmaṇasena era beginning with A.D. 1119 has no historical basis at all.

If the date A.D. 1119 may be taken as the date of Vijayasena's accession, as done by R.C. Majumdar, the Sena chronology becomes easier; in this case Vijaya ruled from A.D. 1119 to 1159; Vallāla—A.D. 1159 to 1175 and Lakṣmaṇa—A.D. 1175 to 1200 or even later. With this chronology, it is reasonable to hold that Vijaya's invasion of Kāmarūpa, if it actually occurred, cannot be placed before A.D. 1142, the date of Vaidyadeva's Kamauli grant, in which he assumed the imperial title; while the invasion of Lakṣmaṇa took place some fifty years after, during the reign of some unknown successor of Vaidyadeva. On these considerations, it is impossible to place the invasions of these two Sena rulers, during the reign of iayapāla and his successor. It is likely that Vijaya invaded during the Jtme of Vaidyadeva, some time between A.D. 1142-45, and Lakṣmaṇa invaded towards the end of the 12th century A.D.; but none of these resulted in the permanent conquest of Kāmarūpa even in part.

(ii) Successors of Jayapāla and Vaidyadeva—Family of Vallabhadeva :

The successors of Vaidyadeva are unknown. The discovery of the plates of Vallabhadeva in Tezpur, dated S.E. 1107 (A.D. 1185), edited by Kielhorn,[172] reveals, however, the genealogy of a group of rulers, such as Rāyārideva, Udayakarṇa and Vallabhadeva. They trace their origin from the kings of Bhāskara's race of the *Candra vaṁśa*. Rāyārideva, known also as Trailokyasiṁha, is described as the "frontal ornament of the kings of Bhāskara's race." The identification of Bhāskara with Bhāskaravarman,[173] is likely; but the latter is said to have belonged to the *Bhauma* dynasty. It is also not clear whether they were the direct successors of Vaidyadeva; for otherwise they would have traced the genealogy from him. K.L. Barua holds that they were not the direct successors of Vaidyadeva and could not have ruled between Vaidyadeva and the date of the inscription (A.D. 1185); but he adds that they were probably feudatory chiefs under later Kāmarūpa kings.[174] P. Bhattacharya asserts that they had nothing to do with Assam.[175] Ray, Vasu and Bhattasali take them to be the immediate successors of Vaidyadeva's descendants.[176] But, as we

172. *E.I.*, V, pp. 181-88; R.D. Banerji thinks that the family of Vallabhadeva was not connected with Assam : (*Bāṅglāra Itihāsa*, p. 317.)

173. N.K. Bhattasali, *I.H.Q.*, XXII, pp. 1-14.

174. *E.H.K.*. pp. 197-98.

175. *K.S.*, (Intro.) p. 43, (f.n. 5).

176. *I.H.Q.*, XXII, pp. 1-14; *D.H.N.I.*, I, p. 56; *Social History of Kāmarūpa*, pp. 229f.

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have stated, the fact that they trace their origin from the family of Bhāskara, and claim no relation with Vaidyadeva, makes it doubtful whether the family of Vallabhadeva was directly connected with Vaidyadeva. There is, however, no difficulty in placing them after Vaidyadeva in almost direct succession, and they may have had very short reigns. It is possible that Rāyārideva was placed as a feudatory of Vaidyadeva in the region about Tezpur in the east, and, during Vijayasena's invasion, the former helped Vaidyadeva. This is perhaps indicated by the plates of Vallabhadeva, which credit Rāyārideva with the defeat of a king of Vaṅga. Rāyārideva's encounter with Vijayasena[177] can be explained in that light. It is also possible that after the defeat and the death of Vaidyadeva in the hands of Vijayasena, who is to be identified possibly with Pheṅguā of our chronicles, the Sena king had to march against Rāyārideva, with the result that Vijayasena met with a reverse, which led Rāyārideva to establish himself as an independent ruler. Udayakarṇa, the next ruler, was not so important ; they may be placed between A.D. 1145 and 1175. Their successor Vallabhadeva is described in his grant as a great hero "who sportively overcame hostile princes, as if they were courtezans".[178] Bhattasali and Ray seem to hold that the campaign led by Bakhtiyar in A.D. 1202 to Tibet[179] was destroyed in Assam by Vallabhadeva or his successor.[180] This does not appear probable because it is unlikely that Vallabhadeva, whose grant was recorded in A.D. 1185, flourished until the invasion of Bakhtiyar in A.D. 1205-6. The reference to his warlike activities in the grant may be explained by the fact that Lakṣmanasena invaded Kāmarūpa towards the end of the 12th century A.D., and Vallabhadeva was involved in war, with the result that the latter was subdued by the former, as stated in the Mādhāinagar grant.

(iii) Vallabhadeva's Successors and Muslim invasions :

The successor of Vallabhadeva is unknown; but during Bakhtiyar's invasion in A.D. 1205-6, according to the *Tabaqāt-i-Nāsirī*,[181] which is confirmed, we believe, by the *Kāṇāi Varaśī* Rock epigraph of North Gauhāti,[182] the name of the king then ruling was Bartu, or Pṛthu.[183]

177. *I.H.Q.*, XXII, p. 10; Ray *D.H.N.I.*, I, pp. 259-60; R.C. Majumdar, *History of Bengal*, I, pp. 213f.
178. *E.I.*, V, pp. 181-88, (V 10).
179. Raverty, I, pp. 560f; *Riyāz-us-Salātin* (A Salam), pp. 65-68; Bhattasali, *I.H.Q.*. IX, pp. 50-62.
180. Bhattasali, *I.H.Q.*, XXII, pp. 4-6.
181. Raverty, I, pp. 560f.
182. *K.S.*, (Intro), p. 44; Bhattasali, *I.H.Q.*, IX, pp. 49-50.
183. *E.H.K.*, p. 198.

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In the opinion of Wolseley Haig, this Bartu was no other than a Kāmarūpa king, who not only defeated Bakhtiyar but also Sultān Ghiāsuddīn in A.D. 1226, and was ultimately overthrown by Nāsiruddīn, the son of Iltumish in A.D. 1228.[184] The defeat of Bakhtiyar, as stated in the North Gauhāti inscription[185] runs thus: *Śāke turaga yugmeśe madhumāsa trayodaśe Kāmarūpaṁ samāgatya Turuṣkāḥ kṣayam-āyayuḥ;* (that is, on the thirteenth of *Caitra* in the *Śaka* era 1127 the Turks coming into Kāmarūpa were destroyed). The second invasion of Ghiāsuddīn Iwaz is perhaps alluded to by an inscription from Gāchtal in Nowgong, indicating that the invader went up to that region . It was issued in the *Śaka* year 1149 (A.D. 1227) and it records that the king Viśvasundaradeva ordered one Candrakānta to repair the damage done by the *mlecchas* to the temple of *Śiva*.[186] N.K. Bhattasali is right in suggesting that they were the Muslims who accompanied Ghiāsuddīn in his campaign against *Kāmrūd* and *Bang* in A.D. 1226.[187] Viśvasundaradeva was probably the real name of Bartu or Pṛthu, as mentioned by Minhāj; he may have been the son or successor of Vallabhadeva. Glazier refers to local traditions which describe Pṛthu as an important king of Kāmarūpa, who built extensive fortifications in present Jalpāiguri in Bengal,[188] perhaps after Bakhtiyar's repulse. The erection of a *Śiva* temple of Jalpeśvara or Jalpīśa in Jalpāiguri is attributed to one Jalpeśvara by the *Yoginī Tantra* (II/6, 8) and the *Kālikā Purāṇa* (51/77). Jalpeśvara, according to our chronicles was another name of Pṛthu.[189] So Pṛthu, Jalpeśvara and Viśvasundaradeva may probably stand for the same ruler, who, after the repulse of two invasions of Bakhtiyar and Ghiāsuddīn Iwaz, was finally overthrown by Nāsiruddīn.[190] The next Muslim invasion was that of Ikhtiyar-uddīn Yuzbak about A.D. 1256-57.[191] The reigning king was probably Sandhīyā, who is mentioned in the *Gurucarita* of Rāmacaran Thākura, and it was he who defeated Yuzbak.[192] Soon after this, Sandhīyā shifted the capital to *Kamatā*, not only owing to the fear of repeated Muslim invasions,[192a] but also because

184. *Camb. History of India*, III, pp. 50-54.
185. *K.S.*, (Intro), p. 44.
186. *I.H.Q.*, XXII, pp. 12-14.
187. Raverty, I, p. 594.
188. *Report on the District of Rangpur*, p. 8.
189. See *Buchanan Mss.* (published by the Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies, (Gauhāti); also *Kāmarūpar Burañjī*, p. 98.
190. *E.H.K.*, p. 227.
191. Raverty, I, p. 263.
192. *E.H.K.*, pp. 245f.

192a. The horde of coins, numbering 29, found at Kadali, about 12 miles from the town of Nowgong, which have now been preserved at the D.H.A.S. seem to throw new light on the subsequent invasions by the Muslim rulers during the 13th-14th century A.D. The coins are those of the Bengal Sultāns. The earliest one is that of Sultān Nāsiruddīn Māhmud Shāh, the founder of the Balban dynasty, who ruled between A.H. 681-701 (A.D. 1281-1301).

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of the fact that the Āhoms from the east began to push westward after the establishment of their rule in Upper Assam, beginning with the second quarter of the 13th century A.D. In fact, at a subsequent time, with the decline and the extinction of the Hindu families, many principalities were founded not only by the Āhoms and the Kachāris, but also by the Koch and the Khāsi-Jaintiās. But the events of this period lie beyond the scope of our work.[193]

9. Conclusion :

To conclude, with Jayapāla came the end of a long line of kings, tracing their origin from the *Bhauma* dynasty, established in Prāgjyotiṣa. Māyana's conquest was only limited to the possessions of Kāmarūpa in Bengal. After overthrowing Tiṅgyadeva, Vaidyadeva became responsible for the foundation of a new line in Kāmarūpa, but his direct successors are unknown. It was probably he who established Rāyārideva as a feudatory, who, after the overthrow and the death of Vaidyadeva, founded another line; his successor Vallabhadeva was perhaps involved in a war with Lakṣmaṇasena towards the close of the 12th century A.D. Viśvasundaradeva, alias Pṛthu, and Sandhīyā were most probably rulers of different lines; but they did their duty in repulsing successive Muslim invasions. It is obvious from the foregoing narrative that the political history of the period after Jayapāla is as obscure as disconnected, and the unity of the kingdom was lost until the Āhoms, after a long period of contests with their adversaries, restored to a great extent the lost political unity to Assam.

193. Reference may be made to a local line of rulers ruling from Śrīhaṭṭa during the eleventh-twelfth century A.D. These rulers were Kharavāṇa, Gokuladeva, Nārāyaṇa, Keśavadeva, and Īśāṇadeva, the last one ruling for more than seventeen years. The region was ultimately conquered in A.D. 1303 by Sikandar Khān Ghāzī during the reign of the Sultān Fīrūz Shāh : (R.C. Majumdar, *The Struggle For Empire*, pp. 42f).

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SECTION 5

ADMINISTRATION

1. Preliminary remarks :

From early times we find terms indicating some form of government —monarchy or otherwise in Assam. For a better understanding of the ideas associated with that government we are expected to refer to certain theories on the origin of the social order and of the State, as well as their inter-relations. According to the general view, in ancient India the State could not emerge without an organised society, and its fundamental aim was to do away with the period of '*Mātsyanyāya*', create conditions for the welfare of all and to strive for the realisation of the three aims of life, '*dharma-artha-kāma*', paving the way for the fourth—'*mokṣa*'. This could only be possible when some authority was devised to administer justice to all, and this called for a machinery whose primary function was the administration of justice with the help of '*daṇḍanīti*'. In fine, the State was thought to have originated either by an appeal to a higher authority which provided the '*daṇḍanīti*' or by an agreement between groups in an organised society. Society, as conceived in ancient India, consisted of groups rather than individuals, and the aim of the State was to ensure the social and spiritual ends of each group and individuals.[1]

A number of conditions were required that the authority might provide for an orderly life. The ruler was made subservient to law, but placed above the groups, and was made to bear in mind that only the welfare of all would conduce to his own happiness.[2] But, the success of the system depended upon the mutual co-operation of State and society.

The actual system of administration, monarchical or otherwise, was evolved through a gradual process, and took two forms: evolution from a tribal polity to something like an imperialism, and from a small republic to a confederation; in some cases, as among the tribes of Assam, the antique system, based on republican ideas and practices persisted for centuries. With this evolution was linked up the enlargement of a State

1. See *Manu*, VIII, 41; *Yājñavalkya*, II, 195.
2. See *Arthaśāstra Bk*. I, Chap, XIX; *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, III, 70.

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into a big kingdom. Though we come across terms indicating a gradation of monarchies and imperial titles like the '*ekarāṭ*' and the '*samrāṭ*' and the performance of imperial ceremonies by monarchs under many dynasties in ancient India, suggesting the existence of empires at different periods even before the Mauryas, these were not empires on a large scale. The idea of an empire had an intimate relation with the geographical vision of a particular period and people, which widened with the new conquests made. In that sense no ruler of ancient Assam, including Bhāskara and Harṣadeva, could carve out a large empire, though they assumed titles like '*Mahārājādhirāja-Parameśvara-Paramabhaṭṭāraka*'. Moreover, these titles had different implications at different periods of history.

It is evident that kingdoms and institutions had a gradual development. It is not possible, however, to infer when an organised State was established in Assam; it is possible that it existed during the foundation of the *Bhauma* dynasty in Prāgjyotiṣa, laid by the Alpine chiefs of Bhagadatta's family. Even though the kingdom of Bhagadatta was a large one, evidence of its divisions and the distribution of State functions is lacking.

The existing sources, however meagre, show that monarchy was the normal form of government in ancient Assam. We have no means of investigating into the working of the machinery of government in a number of States, mostly feudatory, mentioned in the grants. Epigraphy indicates that the State was conceived of as being constituted by seven component parts, called *prakṛtis* in the Hindu law books, having their respective functions and inter-relations. These are the king (*svāmin*), minister (*amātya*), territory (*janapada*), fort (*durga*), treasury (*kośa*), army (*daṇḍa*) and ally (*mitra*).[3] A significant reference to these elements (*prakṛtayaḥ*) is made in the Bargāon grant (v 10), referring to the election of Brahmapāla when there was nobody of Naraka's race to succeed Tyāgasiṁha who died without leaving any heir. Hoernle translates *prakṛtayaḥ* as subjects.[4] Kālidāsa uses *prkṛti* both as ministry and subjects.[5] Mallinātha, quoting Viśva, explains it thus : (*prakṛtiḥ sahaje yonau amātye paramātmani*). Śukra also uses the expression in different senses.[6] But ordinarily, as we have stated, the term *prakṛti* stands for seven organs or parts of the State. The expression in the Bargāon grant may have stood for the ministers, other officials and

3. *Arthaśāstra*, VI. I; VIII, I; *Manu*, IX, 294; *Kāmandaka*, IV, I; *Śukra*, V, 12-13; *Śānti Parvan*, LVI, 5; LXVIII, 7.
4. *J.A.S.B.*, LXVII, I, pp. 113f.
5. *Raghuvaṁśa*, VIII, 18; XII, 12.
6. *Śukranīti*, V, 12-13.

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leading members of the community, who participated in the election of Brahmapāla. The idea of the seven elements of the State (*saptāṅga*) is also clear from the Kamauli grant of Vaidyadeva.[7] This is confirmed by the *Kālikā Purāṇa* ((84/60-61) which lays importance on the said seven elements of the State, known as *rājyāṅgaṁ*. It appears, therefore, that in ancient Assam, as in other parts of India, the conception of the State as an organism, constituted of the seven elements, was recognised. As B. K. Sarkar writes, this conception is "not merely structural or anatomical but also physiological in the sense that it is functional—It embodies really a psychological attempt to conceive and classify political phenomena in their logical entirety".[8]

Whether under monarchy or any other system, a balance between centralisation and decentralisation was the key-note of ancient Indian administration in general. The working of this principle in Assam will be illustrated from the treatment of the subject. This principle of autonomy, though sometimes restricted, may have worked both in political and socio-economic spheres. But the socio-economic and political life of the Assam tribes were apparently left undisturbed by the rulers of the central kingdom of Prāgjyotiṣa, and we find only a few references to their relations with the centre. They were, in fact, governed by a different polity, evolved by them through centuries of segregated life, and more or less democratic.

2. Central Machinery :

(*i*) *Kingship and character of monarchy:* We have a number of ancient Indian theories on the origin of kingship, such as divine, quasi-divine, contractual, or even originating in war.[9] While some writers like U. N. Ghoshal [10] take an extreme view of the divinity of the ancient Indian king, pointing that the rulers were thought of not merely as *nara-devatās*, but also as *devatās*, others [11] take kingship to have been always more or less elective; but the truth lies midway between the two theories.[12]

7. *E.I.*, II, pp. 347f.
8. *Positive Back-ground of Hindu Sociology*, Bk. II, I, p. 39.
9. *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, I, 14; *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, V.
10. *Hindu Political Theories*, pp. 180f; *The Beginnings of Indian Historiography and other Essays*, p. 114.
11. K.P. Jayaswal, *Hindu Polity*. II, pp. 3f.
12. N.C. Bandopadhyaya, *Development of Hindu Polity*, pp. 83f, 125f; N.N. Law *Ancient Indian Polity*, pp. 112f; P.N. Banerjee, *Public Administration in Ancient India*. pp. 70f.

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Whatever the origin of kingship, belief in the divine nature of the rulers of Assam is indicated by the fact that they traced their descent through the Boar incarnation of *Viṣṇu*. The same idea is suggested by the fact that some of them were compared with gods. Puṣyavarman was like second *Viṣṇu*.[13] Nārāyaṇavarman was the divine *Cakrapāṇi* in human form.[14] Bhūtivarman[15] was like *Indra* in power and fame; so were Susthitavarman[16] and Brahmapāla.[17] Ratnapāla emulated the renowned good deeds of *Rāma* and *Kṛṣṇa*, [18] and was like *Puruṣottama* and *Janārdana*.[19] Vaidyadeva is compared with *Varuṇa*, *Kuvera*, *Bṛhaspati* and other deities because of his possessing their qualities.[20] The rulers might have been so compared because thereby they expected to receive respect from their subjects equal to that of the gods; for Manu says that even an infant king should not be despised, as he is a great god in human form.[21]

That kingship in Assam was sometimes elective, is gathered from epigraphy. We have already referred to the election of Brahmapāla by the high officials and important members of the State, as given in the Bargāon grant. As stated therein (v 10) he was elected king, as he belonged to the *Bhauma* family and possessed the requisite qualifications to rule the State. K. L. Barua believes that such instances of election are myths; he further opines that Brahmapāla was an upstart who proclaimed himself king, and the people had no other alternative than to accept him as such; and in order to justify his kingship, Brahmapāla was proclaimed as a scion of the *Bhauma* dynasty, the choice of the people having fallen upon him.[22] But, as the said epigraph shows, Brahmapāla was elected king because of his ability, when there was no issue of the last king Tyāgasiṁha. Instances of election are also found in other dynasties of ancient India. It is, however, true that in case of election the choice in almost all occasions fell on a prince of the former ruling family and exceptions are rare, as are exceptions to the law of primogeniture in a hereditary monarchy.

13. Doobi grant, V 6.
14. *Ibid*, V 22.
15. *Ibid*, V, 25.
16. *Ibid*, VV 39-40.
17. Khonāmukhi grant, V 4.
18. Gauhāti grant, V 9.
19. Bargāon grant, L 46.
20. Kamauli grant, V 19.
21. VII, 8f.
22. *E.H.K.*, pp. 135f.

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The succession was normally by primogeniture, but that, popular opinion was to some extent respected by the rulers, is shown by records where we find instances of selection or nomination of princes, made by the reigning king. Gaṇapativarman "placed his son (Mahendra) in charge of his kingdom, having called the people together": (*janaṁ samāhūya guṇānvitaṁ sutaṁ niyojya rājyaṁ divameva yātavan*).[23] Chandramukhavarman likewise established his son Sthitavarman, when the latter grew up and finished his education.[24] We find also instances of setting aside rightful claimants to the throne either for their physical defects or bad qualities.[25] The two princes, Cakra and Arathi of the line of Śālastambha were not allowed to rule, as both "were disposed to disregard the advice of their preceptors, and so the son of the younger ((Arathi) bore the burden of the kingdom".[26]

Instances of voluntary abdication for various reasons are found in epigraphs. Vanamāla, "having observed that his son had finished his education and attained maturity, made over to him the royal umbrella".[27] Jayamāla or Vīrabāhu, being attacked by a disease, transferred his throne and crown to Balavarman III.[28] Brahmapāla abdicated in favour of his son Ratnapāla, as he thought it suitable to the occasion.[29]

It, therefore, appears that monarchy in ancient Assam was hereditary, and only on failure of heirs were the subjects consulted in the appointment of a king. The people participated in the ceremony of consecration, which gave kingship something of a popular character. The doctrine of royal divinity was not pushed to the extreme, and the subjects accepted the king's divinity because he possessed such qualifications as splendour and power. He was the executor of *daṇḍanīti*, with the help of which he enforced the decrees of law, based on the code of the Brāhmaṇas and customs of the people. In a sense, the office of kingship, based on taxation and protection,[30] was a trust, and the monarchy was but a limited one.[31] Under the circumstances, the ruler could hardly make himself an autocrat. An ideal was held before the

23. Doobi grant V 17.
24. Doobi grant VV 29-31.
25. cf. *Śāntiparvan*, LVIII, 103-10.
26. Hayuṅthāl grant, V 8.
27. Nowgong grant VV 16-17.
28. *Ibid*, VV 21-23.
29. Bargāon grant, V 15.
30. cf. *Śāntiparvan*, LXVI; *Raghuvaṁśa*, I, II, 18; *Arthaśāstra*, I, 9,.
31. See R.K. Mookerji, *Chandra Gupta Maurya and His Times*, pp. 79-84.

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ancient Indian king, by following which he was expected to repay the debt he owed to his subjects; for an ideal ruler was he who could please his subjects.[32] He was expected to strive for his peoples' welfare.[33] This is shown by epigraphy. Kalyāṇavarman indulged in the supreme pleasure of doing good to others.[34] Nārāyaṇavarman became king in order to remove the sixfold demerits of his subjects[35] and the instability of the world.[36] Susthitavarman was born for the uplift of all.[37] Bhāskara devised many ways of enjoyment for his people,[38] and Harjjara engaged wholeheartedly in works of welfare of all.[39]

King's qualities: The king's training as a crown prince was responsible for his future regulated life, and this crown prince is one of the 18 *tīrthas* of literature.[40] The mere accident of his birth as the eldest prince did not make him an heir-apparent. He had to undergo a curriculum of training in all important subjects.[41] His qualities should include nobility, intelligence, energy and personal attainments. The *Kālikā Purāṇa* (85) lays emphasis on king's good qualities, training, education and observance of the injunctions of the *Śāstras*. Inscriptions claim such qualities for the rulers of Assam. Vajradatta studied the *Vedas* and the *Aṅgas* and acquired knowledge in the science of training and breeding of elephants and in the nature and excellence of horses.[42] Samudravarman was the abode of all qualities,[43] like Balavarman, who was also pre-eminent on account of the stand he took for the desired end.[44] Nārāyaṇavarman,[45] like Sthitavarman,[46] had knowledge of the *śāstras*. Bhāskara, the personification of *dharma*, was the abode of politics and good qualities, and the protector of the terrified. Like *Bṛhaspati* he was skilled in dividing and applying the means of politics on proper occasions.[47]

32. cf. *Śānti Parvan*, LVIII, 133; *Dīgha Nikāya*, III, 193.
33. *Arthaśāstra*, I, 19; *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, III, 70.
34. Doobi grant, V 14.
35. *Ibid*, V 21.
36. Nidhanpur grant, V 13.
37. Doobi grant, V 39.
38. Nidhanpur grant.
39. Hayuṅthāl grant, V 12.
40. *Arthaśāstra*, I, 17f.
41. *Ibid* ; *Manu*, II.
42. Doobi grant, V 4.
43. *Ibid*, V 9.
44. *Ibid*, V 10.
45. Nidhanpur grant, V 13.
46. Doobi grant, V 38.
47. Doobi grant, V 54.

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Harjjara was like *Yudhiṣṭhira* in truth, *Bhīma* to his enemies and *Arjuna* in battle. *Lakṣhmī* embraced him because of his personal charms[48]. Vanamāla, who was possessed of all kingly qualities, was like the moon in the sky of the Naraka line, and by his qualities he overcame *Yudhiṣṭhira*, the sea, mountains, the sun, *Karṇa* and *Bhīma*.[49] Brahmapāla was the abode of *rājanīti*,[50] like Gopāla, who was the light of the Pāla line and accomplished in all qualities.[51] The Bargāon grant (L 47-50) speaks highly of Ratnapāla, whose "figure is such as to undo *Manmatha*, whose profundity such as to put into shade the ocean, whose intelligence such as to be a guarantee of the conquest of the world, whose valour such as to surpass *Skanda:* who is *Arjuna* in fame, *Bhīmasena* in war, *Kṛtānta* in wrath, a forest conflagration in destroying his plant-like adversaries; who is the moon in the clear sky of learning, the (sweet) breeze of the *Malaya* mountain—the sun in eclipsing his enemies, the mountain of the east in the successful advancement of his friends". Purandarapāla was accomplished in all arts,[52] like Indrapāla, who possessed wide knowledge and was just and righteous.[53] Dharmapāla was the abode of all arts, possessor of all virtues, the crown-jewel of poets and the sun of the Pāla family.[54] Such statements, however exaggerated they may have been, indicate that the rulers possessed some of the requisite qualifications for kingship.

Ceremonies : One of the most important ceremonies of political importance was the *abhiṣeka*.[55] As described in the *Brāhmaṇas* and the *Śrauta Sūtras,* it included a number of minor rituals. The most important official in these rituals was the *Purohita*, whose office is mentioned in the *Vedas*. The *Kālikā Purāṇa* (86) describes this coronation ceremony, based on the injunctions of the *Śāstras* performed by the *Purohita*, whether of the king or a prince. Evidence for the *Purohita* in Assam is meagre; we find only two references. The *Brāhmaṇādhikārī* Śrī Kaṇṭha was probably a royal priest of Harjjara.[56] The Kamauli grant mentions the royal priest Murāri,[57] whose actual functions are, however, not given.

48. Tezpur grant, VV 12, 14; Hayuṅthāl grant, VV 11-12.
49. Tezpur grant, VV 16, 19, 26.
50. Puṣpabhadrā grant, V 3.
51. *Ibid*, V 4; Khonāmukhi grant, V 8 ; also Gāchtal Ins. of Gopāla.
52. Gauhāti grant, V 11.
53. *Ibid*, VV 15-16.
54. Puṣpabhadrā grant V 8.
55. See Ghoshal, *The Beginnings of Indian Historiography, etc.*, pp. 246f.
56. Hayuṅthāl grant, lines, 26-28.
57. *E.I.*, II, pp. 347f.

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The *abhiṣeka* started with the sprinkling of holy water in the presence of State officers and others, and ended with the handing over of the sacrificial sword to the consecrated king by the *purohita*. An early reference to *abhiṣeka* is found in the case of Sthitavarman, who "enjoyed like *Indra* the performance of the coronation ceremony by the Brāhmaṇas according to *Śāstras*, accompanied by propitiatory sound of conch-shell and the drum".[58] That the feudatory chiefs, princes, and even the common people, took part in the ceremony is indicated by the description of Harjjara's *abhiṣeka*. When that king sat on the throne, surrounded by the prostrated kings like *Indra* by the gods, he was bathed for coronation with water in silver pitchers and poured by princes of high birth, preceded by merchants: (*abhiṣikto vaṇik purvairrājaputraiḥ kulo drataiḥ*).[59] The mention of merchants taking part in the ceremony is very significant, and as far as we know, no such parallel is found in contemporary inscriptions of ancient India. This shows that they were recognised as important members of the State.

B.K. Barua's contention[60] that Balavarman III and Indrapāla were also consecrated, is not possibly supported by the actual interpretation of the texts. Referring to the former, the Nowgong grant (v 23) states thus: "So on an auspicious day, the king (Vīrabāhu) transferred in the prescribed form his throne and crown to his son". This refers either to the voluntary abdication of Vīrabāhu or to his selection of Balavarman as king. As regards Indrapāla, the Gauhāti grant states that before him, "when he sat on his throne, the mosaic floor of his audience hall looked like a fruit-covered tree by reason of the strewn jewels (that fell) from the crowns of the princes, as they voluntarily stood, reverently bowing (before him) with joined hands".[61] The reference here is not to a coronation but to a meeting in the court or a special sitting of the king's council. Barua is again wrong in holding that new names were conferred on kings at their corontation.[62] The title Mṛgāṅka[63] was not, as far as is known, given to Susthitavarman on the occasion of his coronation or accession on the throne. In any case, only on rare occasions were kings crowned by the *Vedic* ceremony of consecration, in which the State officers and important members of the community took part. The ceremony was a

58. Doobi grant V 33.
59. Hayunthāl grant, VV 13-14.
60. *Cultural History of Assam*, I, pp. 40-41.
61. Gauhāti grant, V 15.
62. *Cultural History of Assam*, I, p. 41.
63. The Nidhanpur grant (V 18) simply states that Susthita was renowned as Śrī Mṛgāṅka.

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factor of political import, whereby a religious and a legal sanction were given to the office of kingship, imposing upon the king the moral duty of protecting his subjects and ruling righteously.

The *Aśvamedha* was another ceremony performed by rulers, usually after conquests. It is as old as the *Brāhmaṇas*,[64] and was performed by those who aimed at imperial sway. But the performance of the ceremony did not necessarily raise a king to an imperial status in every case or in every period of the history of ancient India. Instances are not rare of the minor rulers, who had made only a few conquests, performing this rite. The Doobi grant (v. 4) makes the earliest reference to the performance of the ceremony in Assam by Vajradatta; but the reference is doubtful. Mahendravarman performed two *Aśvamedhas*: (*Śrī Mahendravarmā dvisturagamedhāharttā*).[65] Bhūtivarman also performed one, as proved by his Baḍgaṅgā epigraph[66] and the Doobi grant (v. 25). Sthitavarman performed two such sacrifices: (*dvi*)*r-aśvamedhayājī Śrī Sthiravarmā*).[67] The actual significance of the *Aśvamedhas* performed by these kings is difficult to guess; except perhaps Bhūtivarman none was of the stature of either Bhāskara, Vanamāla or Ratnapāla, whose conquests surpassed those of either Mahendra or Sthitavarman. The political import of the *Aśvamedha*, however, cannot be questioned, and it is also true that both Mahendra and Sthitavarman must have made a few conquests before they performed the ceremony.

King's duties and rights : Duty first and rights afterwards was the gospel taught by the teacher of the *Gītā* to a Kṣatriya (Arjuna). The law books emphasise that a ruler should be well protected : (*rājyaṁ rakṣati rakṣitaḥ*).[68] This is in consonance with the advice given, in the *Kālikā Purāṇa* (84/126-35), to the rulers for taking all measures for their safety. He should strive for his protection from all enemies; the subjects also should show due respect to him. He was entitled to a share of the revenue in return for protecting his people. The State, in fine, had to make proper provisions for the king's welfare so that he might provide for the welfare of all. Besides public duties, his duty of protection comprised himself, his family, and his people.[69] As head of the administration,

64. *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, XIII.
65. *Nālandā Clay Seal*, lines 4-5.
66. Lines 1-2.
67. *Nālandā Clay Seal*, line 7.
68. cf. *Arthaśāstra*, I, 17.
69. cf. *Arthaśāstra*, I, 19; *Manu*, VII-VIII; *Āpastambha*, II; *Yājñavalkya*, I, 327f; *Sabhā Parvan*, 89-90.

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he had to provide for the proper working of the State departments both at the centre and in the local units. In the court he was expected to give proper attention to all matters. This is indicated by epigraphy. Bhāskara was easily accessible to all and the people resorted to him for protection.[70] Harjjara, though wholeheartedly engaged in works of welfare of his subjects, could be approached at spare intervals and found in an unruffled mood.[71]

The responsibility of the rulers of Assam for maintaining the divine social order, consisting of the classes and stages of life : (*Varṇāśrama*), is indicated by the epigraphs; but how far this has a bearing on the actual fact, is difficult to guess at present. It was, however, the traditional policy of an ancient Indian State to protect and maintain the *dharma* of classes and stages of life,[72] and several Kāmarūpa kings are said to have made special efforts in this direction[73] The protection of *dharma* (religion) was another important duty of the Kāmarūpa rulers. Bhāskara is said to have revealed the light of the *Āryyadharma* by dispelling the accumulated darkness of the *Kali* Age and established virtue in the realm.[74] Dharmapāla, though a protector of *dharma*, also protected *kāma* and *artha* : (*dharmaparo'pi kāmārthañca pālayati yaḥ*).[75] The *Rājadharma* or *Rājanīti* sections of the *Kālikā Purāṇa* (84-88) are emphatic on this point of king's duties and responsibilities towards himself, to different *varṇas*, comprising the subjects and towards *dharma*.

The issue of *śāsanas* was another important duty of the king. Kauṭilya lays down that peace and war depended upon king's writs.[76] In connection with land-grants the rulers of ancient Assam issued *śāsanas*, binding upon the officers and subjects. The Tezpur epigraph of Harjjara, referring to the settlement of a dispute, fixed a fine for the infringement of the *śāsana* by anybody.[77] Other important duties consisted of making donations and gifts to the deserving,[78] promoting learming, arts and crafts,[79] and finally giving protection to all. Epigraphy bears testimony

70. Nidhanpur grant, V 25.
71. Hayuṅthāl grant, V 12.
72. *Manu*, IV, 126; VII, 221; *Yājñavalkya*, I, 361; II, 192.
73. Nowgong grant, V 7; Nidhanpur grant; Tezpur grant, V 30; Gauhāti grant, V 18
74. Doobi grant, V 55.
75. Śubhaṅkarapāṭaka grant, V 12.
76. cf. *Arthaśāstra*, II, 10; *Śukra*, II.
77. *J.B.O.R.S.*, 1917, pp. 508f.
78. cf. *Manu*, VII, 84-85; *Āpastambha*, II, 10, 26.
79. c.f. *Śukra*, I, 370.

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to the making of land-grants to the Brāhmaṇas, who were placed in a special position of favour. The rulers further made other gifts to the deserving. As given in the Nidhanpur grant, Bhaskara's virtuous activities, like those of *Śivi*, were applied in making gifts for the benefit of others. Vanamāla made lavish gifts of elephants, horses, maids, gold, silver and jewels.[80] That the king became a supporter of learning and a patron of poets, and helped in the cultivation of all arts, is clear from many records. But above all, his fundamental duty consisted in doing away with all disorders in the kingdom and affording protection to his subjects. Samudravarman removed the period of '*mātsyanyāya*'.[81] Nārāyaṇavarman established the stability of his kingdom.[82] Mahendravaman protected his subjects like his own children.[83] Chandramukhavarman removed all blemishes like theft, famine and oppression.[84] Harṣadeva looked upon his subjects as his own children, and protected them, but never ill-treated them.[85] This paternal ideal helped in the successful working of the administration and in creating goodwill between the ruler and the ruled.

To sum up, there were numerous checks on the autocracy of the king, such as the religious and legal sanction of the coronation ceremony, the spiritual influence of the *purohita*, the traditional emphasis on the rule of law or *dharma*, the king's training as a crown prince, the customs of the people and the country, the devolution of the machinery of government, and the king's duty of protection, which if not carried out might lead to revolt. These perhaps "made the Hindu monarch act up to the concept of *dharma*".[86]

(ii) *Court Officers :* Inscriptions mention a set of officials who helped the king in his court and the royal palace. Besides the *Rājaguru*,[87] the court was adorned by poets, learned men[88] and physicians (*Bhiṣaks*).[89] The chief warden of the palace was the *Mahādvārādhipati* who probably controlled access to the king and appointed *dvārapatis* for guarding the

80. Tezpur grant, V 30.
81. Nidhanpur grant, V 8.
82. *Ibid*, V 13.
83. Doobi grant, V 18.
84. Doobi grant, V 34.
85. Hayunthāl grant, V 6.
86. V.R.R. Dikshitar, *Hindu Administrative Institutions*, p. 102.
87. Kamauli grant, (*E.I.*, II, 347f).
88. Bargāon grant, Lines. 28f.
89. Nowgong grant, V 21.

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gates of the palace. The *Mahāpratihāra* was the head chamberlain. The Hayuṅthāl grant of Harjjara mentions Jayadeva as the *Māhādvārādhipati* and Janārdana as the *Mahāpratihāra*.[90] The Nowgong grant of Balavarman mentions one *Mahallakaprauḍhikā*, an old lady who was probably in charge of the royal harem. The king also appointed a number of messengers known as *dūtaka*, *lekhahāraka* and *dīrghādhvaga*, who communicated royal orders to local officers and subjects. They also served as peace-time messengers and guides.[91] In his day to day administration, the king was helped by a prince;[92] princes were also appointed as governors of provinces;[93] Even royal *śāsanas* were sometimes issued in their names, as proved by the Hayuṅthāl grant (L. 25-26) which was issued by Harjjara's son Vanamāla.

(iii) *Mantripariṣad :* The king was advised by a council of ministers. Yuan Chwang mentions that, when Bhāskara, accompanied by his ministers, went to meet Harṣa, the former held a meeting with them.[94] The Kamauli grant (v. 10) mentions a council of ministers, and king Vaidyadeva is described as a sharp-rayed sun in the midst of the assembly of the *sacivas : (sacivasamāja-saroja-tīgma-Bhānuḥ)*. The actual strength of the council is not known. The existing sources seem to point to the appointment of Brāhmaṇas as ministers. The Kamauli grant shows that these posts were held only by Brāhmaṇas and were hereditary.[95] The *Kālikā Purāṇa* confirms this. It states that the king should appoint learned Brāhmaṇas as ministers :[96] (*Mantriṇastu nṛpaḥ kuryyād viprān vidyāviśāradān | Vinayajñān kulīnāmśca dharmārthakuśalān ṛjūn* ||). This is also laid down in the *Arthaśāstra*; but the *Mahābhārata* recommends the appointment of councillors from the four *varṇas* if they possessed the requisite qualifications.[97] The Hayuṅthāl grant (L. 26-28) mentions one Śrī Govinda as the *Mahāmātya* (great minister) under Harjjara. The Baḍgaṅgā epigraph mentions Āryyaguṇa as a *Viṣayāmātya* which ordinarily means a minister in charge of a district, under Bhūtivarman. So there were probably many ministers in charge of departments.

Inscriptions mention ministers as *mantriṇs*, *amātyas* and *sacivas*. Though Kauṭilya does not make any distinction between them,[98] Kāman-

90. Hayuṅthāl grant, Lines 26-28.
91. Life of Yuan Chwang, 165f; Watters, I, 348.
92. Hayuṅthāl grant; Śubhaṅkarapāṭaka grant, V 6.
93. Gauhāti grant, VV 11-13.
94. *Life of Yuan Chwang*, p. 172.
95. *E.I.*, II, pp. 347f; it is extremely doubtful, however, whether Vaidyadeva and his family were pure Brāhmaṇas.
96. *Chap.* 84, V 103.
97. *Śānti Parvan*, LXXXV, 7-11.
98. *Arthaśāstra*, Bk. I, 15.

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daka defines their respective functions. According to him, the *mantriṇ* should, after due considerations, report to the king about the use of the four means of goverment, such as peace, corruption, force and dissensions, and about their application and result. The *amātya* was entrusted with the supervision of land and the collection of land revenue from cities, villages, etc. The *saciva* was in charge of the war department.[99] It is likely that in Assam also a distinction was made between them. This will be evident from our treatment of various state departments. Collectively they were entrusted with the task of giving proper advice (*mantra*), on which the safety of the king depended.[100]

It is not known whether there was anything like a small cabinet to transact important and confidential business.[101] That the king sat in the council, is proved by the epigraphs, and there are references to the feudatory chiefs and other important members of the community attending the meeting.[102] It is unlikely that they were also present at the ordinary meetings of the *Mantripariṣad* or of the small cabinet, if one existed.

(iv) *Divisions of the State machinery :* The distribution of the functions of the State machinery was one of the primary duties of the king. The extension of the kingdom and its growing importance resulted in the evolution of an elaborate machinery, organised into departments such as the revenue, military, justice, etc., from the central structure to the units. Epigraphy bears testimony to this. The *Kālikā Purāṇa* confirms this and recommends that for each department, like the treasury, local administration and the judiciary, a group of officers should be appointed.[103]

3. Revenue Administration :

The administration of a kingdom depends upon revenue, without which the State cannot be run. As Kāmandaka writes, it is an universal saying that the treasury is the root of kings: (*kośamūlohi rājeti pravādaḥ sārvalaukikaḥ*).[104] Like *dharma* and *kāma*, *artha* was also important.[105] Dharmapāla protected them all equally.[106]

99. *Chap*. XII, 36-40.
100. *Arthaśāstra*, I, 15; *Śānti Parvan*, LXXXIII, 48.
101. cf. *Arthaśāstra*, I, 15; *Śānti. P.* LXXXV, 61; *Manu*, VII 56-57.
102. Doobi grant, V 17; Gauhāti grant, V 15.
103. *Chap*. 84, V 54; *Kośe janapade daṇḍe caikaikatra tryaṁ trayaṁ* । *prastāvādviniyuñjīta rakṣennaikāṁ statastvimān* ॥
104. *Chap*. XXI, 33.
105. *Vana Parvan*, XXXIII, 48; *Yuddha Kāṇḍa*, LXXXIII, 32-39.
106. Khonāmukhi grant, V 12.

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(i) *Principles of taxation :* Revenue was derived both from taxation and other sources. The Hindu texts and epigraphs advocate the principle of equity in the matter of levying and the collection of taxes. The treasury was to be increased gradually, if at all necessary. Some communities, like the Brāhmaṇas of the *agrahāras*, were exempted from taxation. That this principle was followed in Assam is indicated by epigraphs, whereby lands given to Brāhmaṇas were freed from all taxes and official harassments.[107] The wealthy classes were required to pay taxes because of their ability to do so. There were cases of irregular levies, but, according to Hindu texts, taxation was normally based on ability to pay and least sacrifice.[108]

(ii) *Sources of Income : Land revenue and the ownership of land :* Land revenue formed the main item of State income. The traditional charge in ancient India was one-sixth of the produce, but the levy varied on different occasions, partly according to the nature of the produce of the land. To determine the incidence of tax a regular system of land tenure and survey was in force.[109] The levy of land tax (*kara*) is mentioned in the Nidhanpur grant (L 51) in connection with its re-issue when the original plates were lost. The term is also mentioned in the Kamauli grant along with the expression : *Karopaskaravarjjitaṁ*.[110] *Kara*, according to B.K. Barua, stands for the general tax levied on land periodically, and he takes it to be synonymous with *bhāga*.[111] U.N. Ghoshal takes it as other than *bhāga*, in the sense of a general property tax levied periodically.[112] It is, however, difficult to decide whether in Assam any distinction was made between *kara* and *bhāga*; the latter, according to the *Smṛtis*, definitely means the king's share of the produce, paid in kind.[113] But in such works, *kara* is different from *bhāga* and is a tax paid in cash.[114] It seems to us that the only term used for land revenue in Assam was *kara*, which probably stood for the tax paid both in cash and in kind. In any case, it was, as Barua maintains, a periodical tax, but certainly not synonymous with *bhāga*. It was a regular tax levied on cultivators, who may have had the option to pay either in kind or in cash. The Nidhanpur grant mentions one Dattakārapūrṇa as the tax-collector.

107. Nowgong grant; Bargāon grant; Gauhāti grant, etc.
108. P.N. Banerjee, *Public Administration in Ancient India*, p. 180.
109. cf. *Arthaśāstra*, Bk. II, 2; *Manu*, VII; *Śukra*, IV; *Śānti P.* XXIV.
110. *E.I.*, II, p. 353.
111. *Cultural History of Assam*, I, p. 81.
112. *Hindu Revenue System*, pp. 36-37, 64-65.
113. *Manu*, VIII, 130, 276; Kauṭilya, V, 2; *Gautama*, X, 24-37; also see Keilhorn, *E.I.*, VII, 160; R.D. Banerji, *E.I.*, XV; Vogel, *Antiquities of Chamba State*, 167-69; Ghoshal, *Hindu Revenue System*, 214.
114. G.N. Jha, *Manu Saṁhitā*, IV, II, p. 340.

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We have already mentioned that, to determine the incidence of land revenue, a system of land tenure was in force. This leads us to the consideration of the question of the respective rights of the crown and the tillers of the soil over land. Supporting the view of V. Smith and others that "the law of India has always recognised agricultural land as being Crown property",[115] B.K. Barua asserts that "the Kāmarūpa kings, following the general northern Indian tradition claimed that all land belonged to the crown". He further contends that "the bulk of evidence proves the contrary—the king was the sole owner of the soil".[116] But, the evidence on which his contention is based, does not warrant such a conclusion. He himself admits that the procedure of granting lands to Brāhmaṇas raises an important issue regarding the Indian theory of the ownership of the soil by the Crown. Barua somewhat contradicts himself by holding "that the major part of the cultivable land was held by the agriculturists who farmed it.—The right of occupation was hereditary, subject to the payment of dues and taxes to the king's officers or representatives."[117]

The theory of the ownership of land by the crown is based on the wrong interpretation of texts from Kauṭilya and Manu (VIII, 39).[118] But, not only the early Vedic literature (R.V., X, 173; A.V., IV, 22-2) but also the *Arthaśāstra* itself (Bk. II, 1, 47) and Manu (IX, 44) recognise the claim of the tillers of the soil to be the owners of lands, and Kauṭilya made a distinction between Crown's land and privately owned land, over the latter of which the king had only a protective control.[119] The individual ownership of lands is best shown by later *Smṛtis* and commentaries.[120] The truth is that views on the question of ownership of land by the king and individuals differed according to place and time in ancient India, and whatever the divergent theories of the legal literature on this point, in practice the tillers of the soil were the ultimate owners of lands, the king's rights being normally confined to eviction for non payment of taxes. Regarding public land, therefore, the king was entitled only to sovereignty; but his proprietary right extended to his own estates,

115. *E.H.I.*, p. 131; *Oxford History of India*, p. 90.

116. *Cultural History of Assam*, I, 76f.

117. *Ibid*, pp. 76-77.

118. See Barnett, *J.R.A.S.*, 1930, p. 166; Bühler, *Note on Manu* (VIII, 39); Hopkins, *India, Old and New*, pp. 221f. Ghoshal (*I.H.Q.*, VI, 658-63) criticises their views,

119. See also *Śānti Parvan*, LVI, 43f; N.C. Bandopadhyaya, *Economic Life & Progress in Ancient India*, pp. 118f; S.K. Das, *Economic History of Ancient India*, pp. 9f.

120. U.N. Ghoshal, *Agrarian System in Ancient India*, pp. 81-103.

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including his right over forests, mines, etc.[121] There is in fact no genuine evidence for ascribing to the king the ultimate ownership of the soil.[122] The king's relations with cultivators can be better explained by reference to his duty of protection of his subjects, in return for which he received revenue from the cultivators, and so long as the latter paid their dues, the ownership of the soil remained with them.[123] Though we have no clear evidence to show what view prevailed in ancient Assam, we may be sure that, as in other parts of India, the royal claim to ultimate ownership, if made at all, had no effect on the peasant, who paid his dues to the State and who was, therefore, the real owner of the soil.

This question of ownership will also be clear from the consideration of the system of land tenure in Assam and from the land-grants, by which lands were donated by the kings.[124] The case has been different to a certain extent with the donated lands; but the remark made by Keith that "when the king donated lands, he granted not ownership but privilege, such as the right to receive dues and maintenance from the cultivators",[125] is only partly true.

Custom duties and tolls : Another important source of revenue was the custom duty on commodities, which according to Kauṭilya, was in the charge of an official called *Paṇyādhyakṣa*.[126] The Tezpur grant of Harjjara mentions the collection of duties on merchandise carried in keeled boats.[127] The nature of the levy is not mentioned. The law givers declare that it should vary from one-tenth to one-fiftieth of the value of goods.[128] We have no information about custom houses. The said grant refers to the levying of *śulka* (tolls), collected by the Kaivartas (fishermen) on the bank of the Brahmaputra. The law books recommend the collection of such dues, ranging from one-sixth to one-twentyfifth.[129] We have no information about road-cess and other traffic duties.

121. Ghosal, *Hindu Revenue System*, pp. 167f; Baden-Powell, *Indian Village Community*, p. 208; J. Monahan, *Early History of Bengal*, pp. 142f; also Stein, *Megasthenes and Kauṭilya*, pp. 93f, 127f.
122. K.P. Jayaswal, *Hindu Polity*, II, pp. 173-85.
123. *Ibid*, pp. 17f.
124. See Nowgong grant; Bargāon grant; Gauhāti grant, etc.,
125. *Cambridge History of India*, I, pp. 176f.
126. *Arthaśāstra*, Bk. II, 16.
127. *J.B.O.R.S.*, 1917, pp. 508f.
128. *Arthaśāstra*, Bk. II, 16, 21; *Manu*, VII, 130-132; *Gautama*, 24-27; *Vaśiṣṭha*, IX, 26-27.
129. *Arthaśāstra*, II, 21-22, 28.

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Mines : The Bargāon grant mentions that the State derived profit from copper mines (*kamalākara*). Kauṭilya places them in charge of *ākarādhyakṣa*[130] and makes them a State monopoly; individually owned mines were also not rare. We have evidence of the washing of gold from the rivers of Assam and working in iron, particularly by the Khāsis, and of salt manufacture by the Nagās. During the Āhom rule, working in gold was extensively practised by a class of people, called *Sanowāls*, who had to pay a custom duty to the State. This is confirmed by the Muslim source Fathiyah-i- Ibriyah.[131] The artisans, therefore, had to pay their normal dues to the State.

Other levies and Incidental charges : There were other taxes and charges levied occasionaly on the subjects. Kauṭilya enumerates a number of them, such as the charges on smiths, and other craftsmen, prostitutes, building sites, religious endowments, income tax, forests, fruits, flowers, heads of cattle, horses, hide and skin, to which must be added as sources of State revenue spoils of war, tributes, voluntary contributions, unclaimed property, fines, etc.[132] The Kamauli grant is important in this connection. It (L. 51) states that the two villages of *Śāntipāṭaka* and *Mandarā*, donated to a Brāhmaṇa were "to be provided with all sources of revenue":(*sarvāyopāya saṁyuktaṁ*) and "to be made free from all kinds of regular and irregular taxes": (*karopaskaravarjjitaṁ*). *Uparikara*, *utkheṭana*, and the dues to be paid by the cultivators in connection with the entry of *chauroddharaṇa* and *cāṭa-bhāṭa*, are mentioned in other grants.[133] Hoernle explains *uparikara* as taxes on tenants who have no proprietary right over lands and *utkheṭana* as imposts.[134] L.D. Barnett takes *uparikara* as the Tamil '*melvāram*' or the crown's share of the produce.[135] Ghoshal takes it as a tax on temporary tenants; he adds that in the grants of Assam, the officers collecting *uparikara* and *utkheṭana* were oppressors. He, therefore, takes both the taxes as irregular revenue which "bore hardly on the cultivators".[136] Fleet explains *uparikara* as a "tax levied on cultivators who have no proprietary rights in the soil."[137] B.K. Barua[138] supports

130. *Ibid*, II, Chapter 12.
131. *J.A.S.B.*, XXX, I, pp. 49f; J.N. Sarkar, *J.B.O.R.S.*, I, 179-95.
132. *Arthaśāstra*, Bk. V, Chap. 11; Śukra, II.
133. Nowgong grant; Bargāon grant; Gauhāti grant, etc.
134. *J.A.S.B.*, LXVI, I, 128f.
135. *J.R.A.S.*, 1930, pp. 165-66.
136. *I.H.Q.*, VII, pp. 384-89; *Hindu Revenue System*, p. 210; *Agrarian System in Ancient India*, pp. 39, 61.
137. *C.I.I.*, p. 98.
138. *Cultural History of Assam*, I, pp. 81-82.

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him. But, in our opinion, these interpretations are not tenable. *Uparikara* has nothing to do with the tax, levied on temporary cultivators, or upon those who had no proprietary right over lands; '*upari*' here is obviously a preposition with the sense of the latin super or extra, and *uparikara*, therefore, means an extra revenue derived from all classes of cultivators, both permanent and temporary. *Utkheṭana* may have meant any kind of tax, levied on specified occasions[139] as an emergency measure, including even levies on the feudatories. So, while both *uparikara* and *utkheṭana* may be included among the list of extra levies, their collection may not have involved acts of oppression. The officers collecting them, like the *Auparika* and the *Utkheṭaka* were not private persons but State officers, and if they were oppressors at all, others like the *rājñīs*, *rājaputras*, etc., included in the list of persons, forbidden to enter *agrahāras*, should be treated as such. The *śāsana* only refers to the nature of the *Brahmadeya* land, made immune from all exactions. Both *uparikara* and *utkheṭana* were extra or irregular levies, payable by all cultivators, and the State collected them only as an emergency measure, as recommended by Hindu texts.[140]

The *Chauroddharaṇa* was another irregular or extra tax, included in the list of taxes from which exemptions were granted to the Brāhmaṇa donees in the grants of Ratnapāla and Indrapāla. In the Nowgong grant the land assigned to the donee is forbidden to be entered by the *Chauroddharaṇika* along with the others. J.F. Fleet takes *Chauroddharaṇa* as "with the exemption of the right to fines imposed upon thieves". Vogel takes it as indicating that the donee was excluded from the special privilege of the punishment of thieves. R.D. Banerji takes it in the sense of the right of extirpation of robbers.[141] N.G. Majumdar takes it as 'with police protection'.[142] U.N. Ghoshal takes it as an oppressive tax imposed upon the villagers for protection against thieves and further adds, on the basis of the grants of Assam, that it was levied for the maintenance of the village police, and was assigned to the donee along with the land itself.[143] The fact seems to be that the donees were exempted from any provision in the shape of money and food to be given to the police officers who might enter their land in connection with the apprehension of thieves, as usually done in villages not exempted. Similarly the Brāhmaṇas were exempt from payments in connection with the entry of *Cāṭas* and *Bhāṭas* : (*cāṭa*-

139. U.N. Ghoshal, *Hindu Revenue System*, pp. 224, 299.
140. *Arthaśāstra*, Bk. V, Chap. II.
141. *E.I.*, XIV; XV.
142. *Ins. of Bengal*, III.
143. *I.H.Q.*, V, pp. 277-79.

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bhāṭa praveśaṁ), or regular and irregular military and police officers. All these were, therefore, included in the list of irregular levies to the State.

Another source of revenue was from the imposition of fines. The grant of Harjjara, referring to a *śāsana*, points out that any violation of it will be dealt with a fine of hundred *cowries*.[144]

(iii) *Items of Expenditure :* The revenue had to be spent with an eye to the yearly budget, which according to Hindu texts should be a surplus one.[145] Money had to be spent for specific ends[146] and on productive and unproductive enterprises.[147] It was one of the aims of the kings of Assam to protect wealth and spend it properly.[148] Bhāskara judiciously applied or distributed the revenue: (*yathāyathamusita-karaṇikara-vitaraṇa*).[149] Money was primarily spent for the expenses of the royal family, State officers and general administration; a considerable amount may have been spent on gifts and grants to the Brāhmaṇas and religious purposes.[150] We have no detailed information on how the State revenue was spent.

(iv) *Revenue Officers :* As the head of every department the king must have had a personal eye to income and expenditure, and was helped by a finance minister. We have already mentioned a few petty revenue officers like the toll collectors (Kaivartas), the tax collector, Dattakāra-pūrṇa, and the collectors of extra revenues, like *uparikaras* and *utkheṭanas*. Besides them, there were others in charge of stores and the royal treasury, like the *Bhāṇḍāgārādhikṛta* and *Koṣṭhāgārika*.[151] From the evidence of the *Arthaśāstra*[152] the former may have been in charge of the royal storehouses, and the latter in that of the treasury. The Nidhanpur grant mentions that the *Mahāsāmanta* Divākara was in charge of the *bhāṇḍāgāra*.[153] The function of these two officers may have corresponded to the *Sannidhātā*, whose duties are enumerated in the *Arthaśāstra*.[154] The

144. *J.B.O.R.S.*, 1917, pp. 508-514.
145. *Yājñavalkya*, I, 317.
146. *Kāmandaka*, V, 76; (*Kāle cāsya vyayaṁ kuryyāt trivarga-parivṛddhaye*).
147. *Arthaśāstra*, II, 6; *Śukra*, II, 338-39.
148. Khonāmukhi grant, V 12.
149. Nidhanpur grant, 36.
150. Tezpur grant of Vanamāla, VV 28-29; Gauhāti grant, V 10; Śubhaṅkarapāṭaka grant, V 7, etc.
151. Nidhanpur grant; Gauhāti grant.
152. Bk. II, chaps. 5-6.
153. U.N. Ghoshal, *Hindu Revenue System*, p. 224.
154. Bk. II, chap. 5.

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name of the officer in charge of the entire collection of revenue, the *Somāharta* of Kauṭilya,[155] is not known. There were other minor officers, such as clerks, accountants and scribes, attached to the department. The most important part of the revenue administration was the department of records and survey works, which helped in the assessment and systematic collection of revenue.

(v) *Land survey and the Department of records :* Epigraphs mention various types of lands, such as *kṣetra* (arable land), *khila* (waste land) and *vāstu* (building sites). The Bargāon and Gāchtal grants further mention *apakrṣṭabhūmi*(inferior land).[156] The grants indicate that some sort of classification was made in order to determine the nature of lands and to be conversant with the amount of revenue that would accrue from a particular plot.

Inscriptions prove that both collective and individual land tenures were known. Both practices have been in use from the earliest times. While some writers hold that collective ownership preceded individual,[157] others cling to the contrary view;[158] but the truth seems to lie in the fact that from the time when the right over land was recognised, arable lands were held individually and by the family members, but waste lands, forests, etc., were held in common, sometimes by the whole village.[159] As Macdonell and Keith hold, there "is nothing to show that the community as such owned or held land".[160] The land-grants of Assam show that lands were given individually and forests, mines, etc., belonged to the State. This system of land tenure is known now as *Rāyatwārī*.[161] One difference from the present system lies in the fact that not only arable lands, but also those including pastures, water reservoirs, etc., as mentioned in the grants, could be held by a single donee. By the Tezpur grant of Vanamāla, land was granted to Indoka, furnished with fertile fields and reservoirs of water. The Bargāon grant records the grant of a plot of land to Viradatta, which

155. *Arthaśāstra*, Bk. II, chap. 6.
156. *J.A.S.B.*, LXVI, I, p. 118; also *K.S.*, p. 107 (f.n. 7) (for different views).
157. Maine, *Early History of Institutions*, pp. 77f; *Village Community in East and West*; Leveleye, *Primitive Property* (Tr. Marriat); U.N. Ghoshal, *Agrarian System in Ancient India* , p. 2.
158. J.S. Lewinski, *The Origin of Property*, II, pp. 6-18.
159. See N.C. Bandopadhyaya, *Economic Life*, 89f, 108f, 122; S.K. Das, *Economic History*, p. 9f; B. Powell, *Indian Village Community*, pp. 7f; Hopkins, *India—Old & New*, pp. 209-231.
160. *Vedic Index*, I, p. 100.
161. U.N. Ghoshal, *Agrarian System*, pp. 77f; *Hindu Revenue System*, p. 45; B. Powell, *Land System*, I, pp. 180f; II, 467f; Vinogradoff, *Outlines of Historical Jurisprudence*, I, pp. 325-26.

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included houses, paddy fields, dry land, water, cattle pastures, waste lands, etc., of whatever description, inclusive of any place within its borders. The Nidhanpur grant records the grant of lands to a number of Brāhmaṇas individually, but water, pastures, etc., may have been held in common. The grant further shows that there were rules guiding such a land tenure. When lands granted by Bhūtivarman became liable to revenue on account of the loss of copper plates, Bhāskara renewed the grant to the Brāhmaṇas, "who had been enjoying the grant in the manner of *bhūmicchidra*, so that no tax is levied on it as long as the sun, the moon and the earth will endure".[162]

While lands granted to Brāhmaṇas were made revenue free and immune from all oppressions and confiscation, the grants do not help us in determining the ordinary arable land tenure of the cultivators. The mention of *bhūmicchidranyāya*[163] is, however, important. Fleet explains *bhūmicchidra* as a "fissure (furrow) of the soil".[164] Oppert explains *cchidra* as "a field unfit for cultivation." In the opinion of K.M. Gupta, *bhūmicchidra* means all lands, and the meaning of *bhūmicchidranyāya* is the rule relating to boundaries in connection with land-grants.[165] Barnett, explaining *bhūmicchidranyāya*, holds that the donees holding such lands became merely tenants-at-will.[166] U.N. Ghoshal explains it as "the maxim of the uncultivable land." It means also the granting of the full right of ownership that can be acquired by the person making a fallow land cultivable for the first time.[167] Bühler refers to the expression in the *Vaijayantī*, (*Bhūmikāṇḍa*, *Vaiśyādhyāya*) where it is explained as *kṛṣyayogyā bhūḥ*.[168] Here the compound must be resolved as *kṛṣi* and *ayogyā* (unfit for cultivation). Besides the Nidhanpur grant, the expression also occurs in the Kamauli grant of Vaidyadeva as: *Bhūcchidrañca akiñcitakaragrāhyaṁ*, (an uncultivable land, wherefrom no revenue is to be realised) and *bhūcchidraṇeti niścayāt*: (as determined by the *bhūcchidra* rule).[169] Hence the expression, *bhūcchidranyāya* of both the records means, as suggested by P. Bhattacharya, that no assessment is to be made on the plot of land covered by the grant, "just like unarable land," which is not assessable.[170]

162. Lines 52-54.
163. cf. *Arthaśāstra*, Bk. II, chap. 2.
164. *C.I.I.*, III, p. 138.
165. *I.A.*, LI, pp. 73-79.
166. *J.R.A.S.*, 1931, pp. 165-166.
167. *Hindu Revenue System*, p. 212 (f.n.); *I.H.Q.*, VII, pp. 384-89.
168. *E.I.*, I, p. 74.
169. Kamauli grant of Vaidyadeva, Lines 51, 62.
170. *K.S.*, p. 33 (f.n. 1); *J.R.A.S.*, 1926, pp. 488-89; *E.I.*, XIX, p. 121; *E.I.*, II, pp. 349f; *Gauḍalekhamālā*, p. 134.

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The evidence is very important, as it shows that there were lands which, like waste lands, were left unsurveyed by the State, and were not brought under any system of tenure.

A special kind of tenure was *Brahmadeya*, by which lands were granted to Brāhmaṇas and were regulated by special rules. Such grants were made either in the form of small plots, or groups of villages, called *agrahāras*. Epigraphy bears testimony to both the types; if granted to a single person, such land was called *ekabhoga*, and if to several persons, the land granted was *gaṇabhoga*. Such lands, as we have noted, were made revenue free and immune from all harassments. The Nowgong grant of Balavarman, granting lands to Brāhmaṇas, states the king's *śāsana* thus: Be it known to you that this land includes houses, paddy fields, dry land, water, cattle pastures, etc., of whatever kind it may be, including any place within its borders, and into which land entry is prohibited to all *Rājñīs*, *Rājaputras*, *Rāṇakas*, etc., and any other person who may cause trouble on account of the fastening of elephants, the fastening of boats, the searching for thieves, the exercise of authority, the infliction of punishment, etc. The Nidhanpur grant confirms that such *agrahāras* with all kinds of revenue were given perpetually to the donees. It further indicates that, owing to the loss of the copper plates, the land became liable to revenue and therefore a fresh *śāsana* had to be issued, confirming the original land-grant to the heirs of the former donees. This epigraph proves that the registration of all grants was essential, in the absence of which even *Brahmadeya* lands, like ordinary arable lands, were liable to all kinds of taxes. It further shows that it was the duty of the State to make periodical examination of claims and titles to land-grants.

Inscriptions also mention endowments to temples and other religious institutions, which later on came to be known as *dharmottara* and *devottara*. An early reference to religious endowments in *Mṛgaśikhāvana* near about Nālandā, made by Devavarman, occurs in I-Tsing.[171] Vanamāla not only repaired the fallen temple of Śiva, but also made a large gift of lands, elephants, gold, etc., to the deserving.[172] Ratnapāla erected temples in *Durjayā*.[173] Vallabhadeva established a *bhaktaśālā* near the temple of Mahādeva, for the maintenance of which he granted seven villages along with their woods, thickets, people, water and land: (*sajhāṭa-viṭapagrāmān sajanān sajalasthalān dadau*).[174] These endowments were under temple

171. *Life of Yuan Chwang*, pp. XXVIf.
172. Tezpur grant, V 24.
173. Gauhāti grant, V 10.
174. *E.I.*, V, pp. 181f.

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priests, though often supervised by the State. The practice was continued under the Vaiṣṇava Reformation of the 15th century A.D., and such temples became real centres for the diffusion of religious learning and of social activities.

All these classifications[175] of land are indicative of an elaborate system of land survey, by which specific divisions were made on the basis of productiveness in measures of paddy. There was also a system of the demarcation of the boundaries of each plot on its eight sides (*aṣṭasīmā*). The land granted by Vanamāla was furnished with eight boundary marks.[176] In the Nidhanpur grant, the boundaries of the *Mayūraśālmalāgrahāra* are given in detail.[177] The demarcations were made with the help of hills, mounds, trees, pits, ponds, tanks, river beds and other natural barriers. Sometimes trees were planted to mark boundaries. The grant of Dharmapāla refers to the planting of a *Śālmali* tree and a bamboo post.[178] The definition of boundaries, in short, almost corresponds to the instructions in the texts.[179]

The officer marking the boundaries was called *Sīmāpradātā*. In the Nidhanpur grant the *Nāyaka* of *Chandrapurī*, Śrīkṣikuṇḍa was the *Sīmāpradātā*. The system of measurement is not given in detail. In the grants, the size of a particular plot of land was expressed in terms of producing certain measures of paddy. The measurement was probably made by the *droṇa*, (an area on which one *droṇa* of seeds could be sown). The Śilimpur grant mentions *droṇa* and *pāṭaka*.[180]

It is impossible at the present state of our knowledge to give the actual area of either measure. In the Gupta inscriptions, a *pāṭaka* is equivalent to forty *droṇas*.[181] Kauṭilya uses the term *droṇa* as a measure of weight being

175. During the Āhom rule the classifications were *Rāyatwāri*, *Nisfikherāj* (half-assessed), *Lākherāj* (revenue free), which includes *Brahmottara*, *Dharmottara* and *Devottara*) and waste land tenure based upon a system of State-lease; (Hunter, *Statistical Account of Assam*, I, 49f; *Physical & Political Geography of Assam*, 154f). These classifications are found in the copper plate grants of the Āhom rulers.

176. Tezpur grant (Last Plate).

177. Lines, 128-132.

178. Śubhaṅkarapāṭaka grant (Last Plate).

179. cf. *Manu*, VIII, 246-48.

180. *E.I.*, XIII, pp. 289f.

181. cf. Guṇaighar grant of Vaiṇyagupta: (D.C. Sircar, *Select Inscriptions*, I, pp. 331-35.

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equivalent to about 21 lbs.[182] *Droṇa* is used in the same sense in Pāṇini.[183] In modern Assam it stands for one *bighā* of land; but we cannot be sure that it stood for the same area during our period. In Gupta times it was certainly much lagrer.[184]

The department of accounts kept minute details of the nature of the land-grants, which were duly registered. In Assam the grants were generally drafted approximately in accordance with the formulae given in the *Artha-śāstra*. The usual particulars are: place, donor and his ancestors, witnesses, purpose of the grants, exact area of the estate, recipient, duration of the grant, inheritance, inalienability thereof, any guaranteed immunity from tax, etc., testification to future rulers, corroboration from law books,[185] king's name and title, names of the composer and engraver and date.[186] Most of these particulars are noted in the grants. The witnesses of the Nidhanpur grant are Haradatta, Dundhunātha and others. The record office in the city was known as *adhikaraṇa*. The documents (*karaṇas*) were kept in charge of a *Karaṇika*, the registrar of documents. The *Kāyasthas* were the writers. The composer of the Nidhanpur grant was Vasuvarman and the engraver (*sekyakāra* or *takṣakāra*) was Kāliyā.[187] The composer of the Puṣpabhadrā grant was Aniruddha, and Śrī Vinīta was the engraver.[188] Most of the copper plates contain the figure of an elephant, the royal seal and the name of the king with titles.[189] The study of these details gives us an impression that the whole system of record keeping was well-organised, a close parallel of that which we find under the Guptas.[190]

4. Department of Justice :

It has aptly been remarked that *Dharma* or law is 'the king of kings'.[191] It is not known when and how the judiciary was organised in Assam. The sources of law, as given in the texts, are the *Vedas*, *vyavahāra*, *ācāra* or *cāritraṁ* and *ātmatuṣṭi*,[192] to which were added royal *śāsanas* and equity.[193]

182. Pran Nath , *Economic Condition in Ancient India*, pp. 72f.
183. See N. C. Bandopadhyaya, *Economic Life and Progress in Ancient India*, pp. 187f, 271f.
184. Sircar, *Select Inscriptions*, I, p. 501.
185. Corroboration is made in the Nidhanpur grant (*K.S.*, pp. 10-11).
186. See Barnett, *Antiquities of India*, p. 129.
187. Nidhanpur grant , Last Plate; the Gāchtal grant of Gopāla was composed by Balabhadra.
188. Lines 44-45.
189. See Hoernle, *J.A.S.B.*, LXVI, I, p. 114.
190. See Ghoshal, *Agrarian System in Ancient India* pp. 50-51.
191. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, 1/4/12.
192. See *Kullūka Bhaṭṭa's Com. on Manu*, II, 6.
193. *Arthaśāstra*, Bk. III, I.

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(i) *Officers* : In the epigraphs, the rulers are often described as the abode of justice.[194] They had certainly a hand in the administration of justice. The land-grants contain ordinances promulgated by the rulers, which were to be observed by the officers and the subjects concerned, who otherwise were to be punished.[195] These *śāsanas* had the force of law, and these were expected to be in consonance with the rules laid down in the law books. Hindu texts mention a *prādvivāka* or the chief judge and other judges called *dharmādhikārins*. We have in our records reference to only a few officers. The Kamauli grant describes Govinda Gonandana as the *dharmādhikāra*, probably a judge. Vaidyadeva communicated the royal order through him.[196] Inscriptions mention officers with titles, such as *Nyāyakaraṇika*, *Vyavahārika*, *Kāyastha* and others ordinarily at the head-quarters of a district (*viṣayādhikaraṇa*).[197] These seem to have had judicial functions. There were probably courts of justice at the centre and local units, as given in certain texts.[198] Each *viṣaya* had an *adhikaraṇa* with its officer *Viṣayādhipati* as the head. The term *adhikaraṇa* is variously interpreted. R.G. Basak takes it as "an administrative board of a district".[199] R.C. Majumdar takes it as "the royal tribunal in a city".[200] The *Mṛcchakaṭika* refers to the king's judges under the name of *adhikaraṇikas* sitting in the court. The *adhikaraṇa* in the sense of a court of justice is mentioned in the *Daśakumāracarita*, and judges are called *dharmādhikaraṇas* in the *Pañcatantra*. Beni Prasad takes *adhikaraṇa* "as the office and probably the court of a district officer and a secretariat and advisory council".[201] In the Nidhanpur grant, the *adhikaraṇa* is mentioned in connection with the headquarters of a district officer. It is, therefore, probable that in Assam the *adhikaraṇa* was responsible not only for justice but also for revenue and other aspects of the administration. Thus the *Nyāyakaraṇika* of the Nidhanpur grant, Janārdanasvāmī not only dealt with justice but was also an adjudicator who had to inspect and decide if the boundaries of lands were properly demarcated or not, and to settle all cases of disputes arising out of land. A.S. Altekar takes the *Nyāyakaraṇikas* as presiding judges.[202] The term *Vyavahārin* has been taken as an administering agent or a man of busi-

194. Gauhāti grant, V 15; Puṣpabhadrā grant, VV 3-4; Nidhanpur grant, etc.
195. *J.B.O.R.S.*, 1917, pp. 508f.
196. *E.I.*, II pp. 347f.
197. Nidhanpur grant, Nowgong grant, etc.
198. cf. *Arthaśāstra*, Bk. III, I.
199. *Ashutosh Mukherji Silver Jubilee Volume*, III, pt. II.
200. *Corporate Life in Ancient India*, pp. 64-65.
201. *The State in Ancient India*, p. 297.
202. *State & Government in Ancient India*, p. 152.

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ness,[203] the superintendent of law and commerce,[204] or in the sense of a judicial administrator and proceedings.[205] Hoernle takes *vyavahārins* of the grants simply as traders,[206] which is evidently wrong, since the *vyavahārin* is mentioned in the list of officials, connected with the execution of land-grants, for instance, Haradatta of the Nidhanpur grant, and was, therefore, probably a judicial administrator. This seems to be confirmed by the law books and the inscriptions of Aśoka.[207] But we cannot be sure of the *Vyavahārin's* functions in Assam, as these are not enumerated in the grants. It is probable that he was a judicial administrator or a lawyer, whose chief duty consisted in interpreting laws in connection with boundary disputes of a district.

(ii) *Judicial procedure and Punishments :* We have no details of judicial procedure in Assam, as given in the texts.[208] Epigraphs mention two types of police officers, *chauroddharaṇika* and *cāṭa-bhāṭa*. The former was the same as *chauroddhātṛ* or *chauragrāha* of the texts. He was a petty officer of the police department, charged with the apprehension of thieves.[209] His other function may have consisted in presenting a culprit in the court for trial. The duties of the *cāṭa-bhāṭa* have not been well defined. Vogel takes *cāṭa* or *cāra* as the head of a *parganā*, whose duty is to collect revenue and apprehend criminals, and *bhāṭa* as subordinate to *cāṭa*.[210] Bhagavanlal Indraji explains the term as *cāṭān prati-bhātaḥ*, i.e.soldiers against robbers.[211] In the *Praśnavyākaraṇāṅga*, they are described as greedy and troublesome.[212] In *Yājñavalkya* they are mentioned along with thieves and record keepers. In the Surat plates of Vyāghrasena they are associated with police and military duties.[213] The Talcher grant of Kulastambha mentions them along with other officers and records that they tried to please their rulers.[214] Bāṇa in his *Harṣacarita* mention *cārabhāṭas* who were hated by people

203. R.G. Basak, *Ashutosh Mukherji S.J. Volume*, III, pt. II; Pargiter *I.A.*, 1930; Ghoshal, *Hindu Revenue System*, pp. 205f, 213f.

204. *Arthaśāstra*, V, 3.

205. B.M. Barua, *Old Brāhmī Ins. in the Udaigiri and Khaṇḍagiri Caves*, pp. 245f. The *Vyavahārika Mahāmātras* of the Edicts of Aśoka are no doubt judges.

206. *J.A.S.B.*, LXVI, I, 128f.

207. D.R. Bhandarkar, *Aśoka*, p. 75; also H.C. Raychaudhuri, *P.H.A.I.*, p. 286.

208. See *Yājñavalkya*, II, 22.

209. A.S. Altekar, p. 152; Ghoshal, *The Beginnings of Historiography etc.* 192f; Beni Prasad, *State in Ancient India*, p. 405.

210. *Antiquities of Chamba State*, p. 132.

211. *I.A.*,IX, p. 175.

212. Also *E.I.*, XI, pp. 219-21.

213. *E.I.*, XI, pp. 219-21

214. *E.I.*, XII, p. 157; XVI, p. 14.

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owing to their greed and cruelty.[215] Pran Nath holds that *cāṭas* were police officers and *bhāṭas* were officers with combined police and military duties, "stationed at the *sthānas* for the protection of the countryside against thieves and criminals and to assist the revenue collectors in enforcing payment".[216] Though details are lacking from the grants, it appears probable that *cāṭabhāṭas* had other duties than those of the police and military, and served also as spies. Like the *chauroddharaṇika* they had the duty of the apprehension of criminals, mainly in the country parts.

Inscriptions mention two other officers, *Dāṇḍika* and *Daṇḍapāśika*,[217] who were probably associated with the department of justice and the infliction of punishment. U.N. Ghoshal takes them as police officers.[218] But it is probable, as held by Beni Prasad, that they were "judicial officers who are invested with the power of punishment".[219] *Dāṇḍika* may be taken as a magistrate who pronounced verdict in the court, while the actual order was carried out by the *Daṇḍapāśika*, who inflicted punishment. The latter, as suggested by Altekar, may have had also the duty of police who carried nooses to catch thieves.[220] Their actual duties in Assam are not defined. The scribe attached to the department was known as *Kāyastha*. The Nidhanpur grant mentions the scribe Dundhunātha.

The procedure of trials, as given in the texts,[221] is not mentioned in epigraphs. Witnesses are, however, mentioned;[222] but it is not known whether they were summoned for trial. That justice was one of the chief aims of the administration, is shown by the grants of some of the rulers, who are described as the abode of justice and righteousness, which suggests that these kings took care that officers like the *Nyāyakaraṇikas* and the *Vyāvahārins* imparted justice fairly. We do not know whether resort was taken to oaths and ordeals for which the tribes of Assam have been noted. We have also no significant record of the punishments meted to criminals, except fines.[223] The release of prisoners on such occasions as when an heir-apparent was installed on the throne, or when a prince was born to the kings, is not mentioned in the grants.[224] We may, however,

215. *H.C.* (Cowell), pp. 229-38.
216. *Economic Condition in Ancient India*, Intro. p. 4 and pp. 60-65.
217. Nowgong grant; Gauhāti grant; Bargāon grant, etc.
218. *Beginnings of Historiography, etc.*, pp. 192f.
219. *State in Ancient India*, p. 405.
220. *State and Government in Ancient India*, pp. 152, 163.
221. *Śukra*, IV, 12-13; *Yājñavalkya*, I, 368.
222. Nidhanpur grant (Last Plate).
223. *J.B.O.R.S.*, 1917, pp. 508f.
224. See *Arthaśāstra*, II, 36.

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presume that the nature of punishment was much the same as in other parts of India, ranging from reproof and fines to execution.[225]

5. Military Organisation :

The kingdom of the size of Kāmarūpa could not have existed without a well organised army. The success of this department depended upon a king's military qualities and organising capacity. Epigraphy shows that most of the rulers fought bravely in the battle-field. Balavarman I endured fire-like arrows in the battle and conquered his enemies.[226] Bhūtivarman defeated his enemies by dint of his powerful arms.[227] Susthitavarman's feet were illumined by the jewels of the heads of kings brought under control by him.[228] Bhāskara vanquished a number of kings in battle, who spoke only in praise of him.[229] Harjjara was an affliction to his enemies,[230] and was like *Bhīma* to his enemies and *Jiṣṇu* in battle : (*Bhīmo'rivarge samareṣu Jiṣṇuḥ*).[231] Vanamāla resembled the sun in the battle-field by reason of his driving forth the darkness of the furious elephants of defeated enemies.[232] Prālambha's foot-stool was illumined by the light of the crest-jewels of all *rājās*.[233] Balavarman III, Brahmapāla, Purandarapāla, Ratnapāla, Indrapāla, Gopāla and Harṣapāla, all distinguished themselves by defeating their enemies.[234] Dharmapāla won victory in the battle-fields that were decorated with the flower-like pearls, struck off from the heads of elephants killed by his sword.[235] Statements such as these indicate that the rulers possessed military qualities and fought many battles, though it may be that some of the descriptions are poetic exaggerations or conventional. In any case, it was not possible for the king to run the department single handed; so he had to appoint other officers for the purpose.

(i) *Spies and Ambassadors—Foreign policy and diplomacy :* The importance of the system of espionage in ancient India is wellknown.

225. cf. *Manu*, VIII, 129f: He mentions *vāgdaṇḍa*, *dhigdaṇḍa*, *dhanadaṇḍa* and lastly *vadhadaṇḍa*.
226. Doobi grant, V 11.
227. *Ibid*, V 25.
228. *Ibid*, V 41.
229. *Ibid*, V 49.
230. Nowgong grant, V 10.
231. Tezpur grant, V 12.
232. *Ibid*, V 18.
233. *Ibid*, V 7.
234. Nowgong grant, V 24; Bargāon grant V 11; Gauhāti grant, V 12; *Ibid*, V 9; Bargāon grant, VV 14f; Gauhāti grant, V 15; Gāchtal grant; Khonāmukhi grant, V 10.
235. Khonāmukhi grant, V 13.

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Spies not only helped in the ordinary apprehension of criminals but also informed the king of internal trouble and impending external invasion and obtained information on the resources of an enemy's State. The *Kālikā Purāṇa* lays down rules for the appointment of spies in different departments with details.[235a] Both spies and ambassadors formed an important element of the foreign policy of the State.[236]

The diplomatic relations of the rulers of Assam with neighbouring States and feudatories are mentioned in the grants. The Doobi grant (v 37) records that the defeated tributary *rājās* bowed down to Sthitavarman. Bhāskara was well-acquainted with the sixfold royal policy.[237] The idea of the circle of States, (*maṇḍala*) as explained by Kauṭilya,[238] is also indicated by epigraphy. Bhāskara made the circle of related powers attached to himself and equalled the powers of the circle of his feudatories by the strength of his own arms.[239] The princes who were hankering after the conquest of each other's territory in the regions of hills and valleys, submitted to Harjjara for peace,[240] evidently because of his central position and influence in the kingdom. The Hayuṅthāl[241] and the Gauhāti grant (v. 15) mention the defeated feudatories as bowing down in the council halls of Harjjara and Indrapāla.

War and diplomacy, therefore, formed an important element of the State policy. Epigraphs also refer to *Mahāsāmantas* and *Sāmantas*, who as feudatories helped the king with military contingents. It was the policy of the rulers to appoint them as commanders in the country parts and even in the central administration. The *Mahāsāmanta* and *Senādhyakṣa* Sucitta and the *Sāmanta Balādhyakṣa* Citragharadakṣa Bhaṭṭa Jīu find mention in the Tezpur Rock epigraph of A.D. 829-30.[242] Bhāskara appointed the *Mahāsāmanta* Divākara to the post of a *bhāṇḍāgārika*. The vassals often came to the capital to pay respect to the king.[243] Inscriptions also mention other chieftains such as *Rājā*, *Rājaputra*, *Rāṇaka*, *Rājanyaka*, *Rājavallabha* and others, who ruled feudatory States as the

235a. 84/60 : *aṣṭau cārānniyuñjīyādaṣṭa-vargeṣu pārthivaḥ* |

236. cf. *Manu*, VII, 156f: (He mentions six principles of the foreign policy of the State : peace, war, balance of power, expedition, alliance, and creation of differences).

237. Nidhanpur grant,

238. *Arthaśāstra*, Bks. VI, 2; XII, 3.

239. Nidhanpur grant, 34f.

240. Hayuṅthāl grant, V 12.

241. *Ibid*, VV 13-14.

242. *J.B.O.R.S.*, 1917, pp. 508f.

243. Tezpur grant of Vanamāla, V 30.

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king's subordinates.[244] The *Rājaputra* was the son of the feudatory *Rājā*. The *Rāṇakas* and the *Rājanyakas* were probably minor feudatories inferior to *Rājā*. The term *Rājanaka* occurs in the grants of the Chamba state; in the opinion of Vogel, it corresponds to *Rāṇā*, and was applied to the vassals of the local *rājās*.[245] In the *Rājataraṅgiṇī*, however, *Rājanaka* is used in the sense of a minister. Pran Nath takes the *Rājanakas* along with *Sāmantas* and *Rājaputra* as constituting land holding aristocracy, who had to supply the king with men and materials.[246] The Kamauli grant proves that the king sometimes displaced disloyal feudatories and established new ones.[247] The *Rājavallabhas* appear to be king's favourites or followers.

Both by peaceful means and war, therefore, the rulers of Assam tried to bring the feudatories under their control. The way in which they kept them in subjugation is known from grants; the royal *śāsana* implies that all the feudatories had to abide by the command of the sovereign,[248] otherwise they could be properly dealt with. This is shown by the grant of Harjjara, which refers to the settlement of a dispute within the territory of the *Mahāsāmanta* Sucitta. It refers to a quarrel between boatmen, towers of boats, and local vassals, for tolls. The settlement was made by the promulgation of the king's order in fixing the boundaries within which the boatmen were to pass by the midstream; anyone transgressing it was made liable to a heavy fine.[249]

The rulers held diplomatic relations with contemporary powers, evidently for political ends. The undying alliance between Bhāskara and Harṣa of Kanauj, made through the instrumentality of Haṁsavega,[250] had an important bearing on the political history of Northern India during the early part of the 7th century A.D. Haṁsavega was quite equal to the occasion. The way he presented the matter before Harṣa and won his confidence, resulting in the alliance, which lasted until the death of both the monarchs, called for a man of ability, befitting a royal ambassador.[251] Another means of cementing alliances was by matrimony. The *Rājataraṅgiṇī* mentions the alliance between Meghavāhana and the Kāmarūpa king through the marriage of Amṛtaprabhā, daughter of the latter, with

244. Nowgong grant; Bargāon grant; Guākuchi grant, etc.
245. *Antiquities of Chamba State*, pp. 110-121.
246. *Economic Condition in Ancient India*, pp. 55f, 128f.
247. *E.I.*, II, pp. 347f.
248. Nowgong grant; Bargāon grant, etc.
249. *J.B.O.R.S.*, 1917, pp. 508-514.
250. *H.C.* (Cowell), pp.211f.
251. *Ibid*, pp. 217-18.

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the Kāśmīra ruler.[252] Another important alliance was between Harṣadeva and Jayadeva II of Nepal in the 8th century A.D. through the marriage of Rājyamatī to the Nepal king which had an important effect on the Kāmarūpa king's conquest of *Gauḍa*, *Oḍra*, *Kaliṅga*, *Kośala* and other lands.[253] The Kāmarūpa kings were also related to the Later Guptas, the Maukharis and the Vardhanas. As mentioned in the Paśupati grant, the Nepal king's mother-in-law, Vatsadevī, was the daughter of the Maukhari king Bhogavarman, who married a daughter of Ādityasena. Thus Harṣa's wife was a grand-daughter of Ādityasena.[254] Purandarapāla's marriage with a princess of the Sadiyā region[255] served the similar purpose of a diplomatic alliance. Subsequent diplomatic relations were held with the Pālas of Gauḍa, the rulers of Orissa, and the Rāṣṭrakūṭas.

Indrapāla's queen, Rājyadevī, the mother of Gopāla was born in the family of the Rāṣṭrakūṭas. The marriage alliance had an important bearing on Indrapāla's successsful wars against the rulers of Gauḍa and Vaṅga, as known from the Gāchtal grant.

(ii) *War and Ethics of war:* The organisation of the military machine did not mean that wars were undertaken at all times. The conquering king tried to avoid wars as far as possible. Manu lays down that war is to be resorted to when all pacific means failed.[256] This is echoed in the *Kālikā Purāṇa* (84/34-35) which lays emphasis on the four-fold policy, to be followed by a king in his relations with other rulers : *sāmadānañca bhedañca daṇḍaśceti catuṣṭayaṁ*. A number of rules were laid down for fighting in the right manner; but in actual practice these were not strictly followed in any part of India. The most important feature of these rules was the consideration shown to the defeated prince, who was usually restored to his kingdom or replaced by one of his relations. Inscriptions show that some feudatories were appointed even to posts in the centre. The *Mahāsāmanta* Divākara, for instance, as we have already noted, was appointed to the post of the *bhāṇḍāgārika*. Defeated *rājās* were sometimes given an important place in the State affairs. As we have stated, during the coronation of Harjjara, they were also present.[257] In Indrapāla's

252. Bk. III, 9.
253. *I.A.*, IX, p. 181.
254. *Ibid*, pp. 178f.
255. Gauhāti grant, V 13; *K.S.*, pp. 130f.
256. cf. *Manu* , VII, 198: (*sāmnā dānena bhedena samastai athavā pṛthak | vijetuṁ prayate tārinnayuddhena kadācana||*); *Śānti Parvan*, LXIX, 24.
257. Hayuṅthāl grant, VV 13-14.

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audience hall, they sat reverently bowing before the king.[258] It appears that the rulers in ancient India in general were guided at times by a moral standard as regards actual fighting; but there is no evidence in our records that medical aid was given on the battle-field, or non-combatants were left undisturbed in wars, as laid down in the texts[259] and confirmed also by many Classical writers.

(iii) *Composition of the Army* : It appears that no hard and fast rule was made for the recruitment of soldiers from a particular class, though Kauṭilya lays down that a trained Kṣatriya constitutes the best of all soldiers.[260] Even Manu refers to the taking up of arms by the Brāhmaṇas in times of need. This is confirmed by Classical sources. An important reference to this is made by one grant of Dharmapāla, which states that the Brāhmaṇa Himāṅga was expert in the discharge, flight and fall of arrows and skilled in different methods of attack and defence.[261]

Six kinds of troops (*ṣaḍaṅgabala*) are mentioned in traditional literature, consisting of *maula* (hereditary), *bhṛtaka* (hired), *śreṇī* (guild army), *mitra* (ally), *amitra* (enemy) and *āṭavi* (forest army).[262] We have details about them in Assam. The division of the army was the traditional four-fold one. The Nidhanpur grant (L. 1-2) mentions that Bhāskara's military camp at *Karṇasuvarṇa* consisted of splendid ships, elephants, horses and infantry (*mahā-nau-hastyaśva-patti*). The *kaṭaka* of Haḍappeśvara, as given in the grants, during the time of Vanamāla, was occupied on all sides by troops of elephants, horses and foot soldiers. Ratnapāla's capital *Durjayā* was crowded by his brave soldiers, who were hankering after the plunder of his enemy's camps.[263] We have no details about the commanders in charge of the different units of the army, as given in the texts.[264]

Cavalry : Inscriptions refer to horses in more than one place. We have already mentioned that cavalry formed an important element of the army of Bhāskara. The grant of Vallabhadeva (v. 12) indicates that horses were imported from Kambhoja. The *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* states that *Kṛṣṇa*, after defeating Naraka, took away from Prāgjyotiṣa as many as twenty-one lakhs of horses from Kambhoja and other excellent breeds.[265]

258. Gauhāti grant, V 15.
259. *Manu* VII, 202-203; *Śānti P.* XCV, 18.
260. *Arthaśāstra*, VI, I; IX, 2.
261. Śubhaṅkarapāṭaka grant, V 20.
262. *Arthaśāstra*, VI, I.
263. Bargāon grant, L 30; Khonāmukhi grant, V 5.
264. *Arthaśāstra*, Bk. X; *Manu*, VII; *Śānti Parvan*. C; *Udyoga Parvan*, CIV.
265. Bk. V, XXIX.

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The location of Kambhoja is disputed.[266] The *Mahābhārata* seems to locate it in the region about North-western India. But the *Bṛhatsaṁhitā* locates the place along with Prāgjyotiṣa and the Lauhitya in the east,[267] and the *Pag Som Zon Zan* locates *Kam-po-tsa* (Kambhoja) in Upper and Eastern Lushāi Hills or in between Assam and Burma. In any case, it appears that the rulers of Kāmarūpa imported horses from Kambhoja. There are places like Maṇipur in Assam where some best kinds of ponies were found.[268] The *Sabhā Parvan* of the *Mahābhārata* (LI, 15-16) states that Bhagadatta gave to Yudhiṣṭhira as presents horses of excellent breed and swift as the wind. The *Tabaqāt-ī-Nāsirī* records that horses in large numbers were imported to Bengal and Assam from Tibet through mountain passes in the north.[269] The records, however, do not indicate that cavalry was greatly used in warfare. The Assamese foot-soldiers are said to have been more skilled than cavalry. This is testified by the historians of the Muslim invasions of Assam, who state that Assamese soldiers were greatly frightened by the Muslim cavalry, but they succeeded in defeating and killing infantry-men.[270] Inscriptions do not mention any particular officer commanding cavalry.

Elephantry : Elephants formed an important element of the army of Assam. The abundance of elephants in the forests of Assam is evidenced both by epigraphs[271] and literature, including the classical sources. The *Śānti Parvan* mentions that the easterners are noted for their skilful fighting with the help of elephants: (*prācya mātaṅgā-yuddheṣu kuśalāḥ*).[272] This is shown by the fact that Bhagadatta fought with troops of elephants.[273] Kauṭilya mentions that the elephants, bred in places like *Kaliṅga*, *Aṅga*, *Karūṣa* and the East are the best;[274] the eastern country probably stands for Prāgjyotiṣa. Kālidāsa writes that elephants were caught in the jungles of Assam.[275] The *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* (v, xxix) refers to 6,000 elephants of Naraka. The figure is exaggerated. Yuan Chwang writes that in the south-east of Kāmarūpa , there were elephants in herds

266. N. Vasu, *Banger Jatia Itihāsa*, p. 172; J.C. Ghosh, *E.I.*, XXIV, p. 45; B.R. Chatterji, *Indian Cultural influence in Cambodia*, pp. 278-79; R.P. Chanda, *Gauḍarājamālā*, p. 37.

267. XVI, V, 1.

268. Watt, *Commercial Products of India*, p. 751.

269. Raverty, I, pp. 567-68; Elliot and Dowson, *The History of Muhammadan India*, II, pp. 311-12.

270. *J.B.O.R.S.*, I, p. 191.

271. Nowgong grant; Bargāon grant, etc.

272. 101, 4.

273. *Udyoga Parvan*, CLXVI,

274. *Arthaśāstra*, Bk. II, Chap. II.

275. *Raghuvaṁśa*, IV, 84.

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and, therefore, there was a good supply of elephants for war purposes.[276] Troops of elephants were presented to Ratnapāla by the defeated kings.[277] The biography of the pilgrim mentions that Bhāskara went to meet Harṣa with 20,000 elephants;[278] this figure too seems to be exaggerated, but confirms the Nidhanpur grant, which indicates that Bhāskara inherited from his brother a large number of elephants.[279] According to the Nidhanpur grant (L. 1-2) a large number of elephants were stationed in the victorious camp at *Karṇasuvarṇa*. Epigraphy also bears testimony to the fact that most of the rulers fought with the help of elephants. The title of the officer commanding the unit is not known; but epigraphs mention a petty servant, charged with the fastening of elephants (*hastibandhaka*).[280]

Ships and Boats: The abundance of rivers in Assam and the extension of the kindom towards the sea made the people well accustomed to the use of boats. Their acquaintance with the sea is indicated by the biography of Yuan Chwang.[281] Epigraphs refer to the royal boats in the Brahmaputra.[282] The grant of Harjjara contains a *śāsana* regulating the plying of boats to avoid collisions between the royal boats and those of fishermen in the Brahmaputra.[283] The Tezpur grant (v. 30) gives a description of the royal boats of the Brahmaputra near Hārūppeśvara. Yuan Chwang states that Bhāskara went to meet Harṣa up the Ganges with a flotilla of 30,000 ships.[284] The figure is doubtful. His military followers along with those of Harṣa went by ships to attend the ceremony at *Prayāga*.[285] The Classical and the Muslim sources[286] point to the use of boats in large numbers by the Assamese.[287]

Epigraphy seems to allude to naval fights between Kāmarūpa and the neighbouring States. The Aphsad inscription mentions that Mahāsenagupta's victory over Susthita was sung on the banks of the Brahmaputra.[288] The reference is perhaps to a naval engagement on the Brahmaputra.

276. Watters, *On Yuan Chwang*, II, 185f.
277. Bargāon grant, lines 28f.
278. *Life*, pp. 171f; Watters, I, p. 348.
279. Nidhanpur grant, V 21.
280. Nowgong grant; Bargāon grant, etc.
281. *Life of Yuan Chwang*, p. 188.
282. Nowgong grant; Bargāon grant, etc.
283. *J.B.O.R.S.*, 1917, pp. 508f.
284. *Life of Yuan Chwang*, 171f; Watters, I, p. 348.
285. *Life of Yuan Chwang*, p. 186.
286. *J.B.O.R.S.*, I, p. 186.
287. See R.K. Mookerji, *History of Indian Shipping & Maritime Activity*, pp. 225f.
288. *C.I.I.*, III, pp. 206f.

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The fact that Bhāskara kept his ships ready in *Karṇasuvarṇa* may also suggest that he apprehended a naval fight with Śaśāṅka. According to the Gāchtal grant of Gopāla, Indrapāla defeated Kalyāṇa Chandra of Vaṅga in a naval fight. That Vaidyadeva won a naval victory over his enemies, is proved by his Kamauli grant.[289] The officers in charge of this unit are not mentioned, except petty officers, such as *Naubandhaka*, in charge of the fastening of boats and *Naurajjuka*,[290] in charge of the dragging of boats with the help of ropes.

Infantry: Details about the foot soldiers are scanty. The Nidhanpur grant (1-2) refers to them as *patti*. The Tezpur grant of Vanamāla states that infantry along with other units of the army occupied all sides of the city of Hārūppeśvara. Of the soldiers of Ratnapāla, crowding the city of *Durjyā*, there were a number of foot soldiers, who were hankering after the plunder of the enemies' camps.[291] Inscriptions also point to rulers fighting with the help of foot soldiers, and the Muslim historians refer to the efficient fighting with the help of Assamese infantry.[292]

Forts: The mountainous character of the land helped in the construction of forts, which, along with other natural barriers, played an important part against external invasions. The hill tribes of Assam lived in seclusion in well fortified villages; that is why we find so little or no reference to political relations between the kings of Kāmarūpa and their chiefs. The kings realised the importance of the construction of forts from early times, as emphasised by the writers on polity. Kauṭilya classifies them into water (*audaka*), mountain (*pārvata*), desert (*dhānvana*) and forest (*vana*) forts, serving their different purposes.[293] The *Kālikā Purāṇa* adds two more: earth (*bhūmi*) and tree forts ((*vṛkṣa*). The same work lays down rules for their construction, stating that they should be either triangular, semicircular, circular or square: (*durgaṁ kurvan puraṁ kuryyāttrikoṇaṁ dhanurākṛtiṁ vartulañca catuṣkoṇaṁ nānyathā nagaraṁ caret*).[294] The cities of Prāgjyotiśa,[295] Śoṇitapura, Hārūppeśvara, and Durjayā, were well fortified both by natural barriers and forts. Prāgjyotiṣa, as described by the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* (I, iv; V, xxix) was well fortified by a defence constructed by Muḍu. The same work refers to the fort at Agni Paravata in *Śoṇitapura* (Tezpur), ascribed to Bāṇa.[296] This is

289. *E.I.*, II, p. 351.
290. *J.B.O.R.S.*, 1917, pp. 508f.
291. Bargāon grant, line 30; Khonāmukhi grant, V 5.
292. *J.B.O.R.S.*, I, p. 191.
293. *Arthaśāstra*, Bk. II, Chap. III.
294. Chap. LXXXIV , VV 112f.
295. The *Mahābhārata* refers to the well-defined city of Prāgjyotiṣa in more than one place.
296. I, XXI; V, XXXII-XXXVII; P. Bhattacharya, *J.A.S.B.*, V (N.S.), pp. 19-20.

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confirmed by the Kumāra-Haraṇa (v. 194) . The Bargāon grant, (L. 34-35) referring to the invincible city of Durjayā, states that it was encompassed by a rampart, furnished with a strong fence. We have further actual remains of forts and embankments at Gauhati,[297] Ḍimāpur,[298] Viśvanāth, Ratnapura,[299] Sadiyā[300] and other places, which we have described in detail in another place. The evidence proves that the kings realised the importance of forts and other defences for the safety of the kingdom.

(iv) *Kinds of warfare and weapons used:* Literary sources mention three kinds of warfare: *prakāśa* ,*kūṭa* and *tuṣṇīṁ yuddha*, based on the nature of fighting and the weapons used for the purpose. The first is explained as an open fight between equals, which is called a righteous war; the second consists in threatening from one side and assaulting from the other, or destroying the enemy when in trouble, or by bribes; while the third is to win over the leaders of the enemy by intrigues or other means, the last two being called unrighteous wars. To these are added what are called *khaṇḍa yuddha* (trench warfare) and *ākāśa yuddha* (fighting from heights) and siege warfare [301] Details about these various kinds of warfare in Assam are lacking.[301a]

Wars were undertaken after sacrifices, consultation of omens and a meeting of the council. This is best illustrated by the nature of the fighting among the Assam tribes, which is very similar to Hindu warfare. The surprise attack, or lying in ambush and then suddenly falling upon the enemy, was the chief strategy of these people,? ven against the British in recent times. An idea of the nature of actual open fighting between the army of Kāmarūpa and Gauḍa is given in the Doobi grant (vv. 48-50) of Bhāskara. This states that when the Gauḍa army arrived at the frontier, Bhāskara and his brother, though they were in their youth only, arrived at the scene with a handful of soldiers. They pierced through the huge troops of mighty elephants of the Gauḍa army with the sharp arrows; having destroyed soon the army of the enemy with sharp arrows and various types of deadly weapons, they in turn were attacked by a large number of elephants. An important allusion to siege craft is made by the historians of Bakhtiyar's invasion of Assam. This is an illustration of an unrighteous

297. Dalton, *J.A.S.B.*, XXIV, 1-4.
298. Godwin-Austen, *J.A.S.B.*, 1874, I, pp. 2-3.
299. Edwards & Mann, *J.A.S.B.*, 1904, I, 254-261; Edwards, *J.A.S.B.*, 1904 (E.N.), 16-19; Dalton, *J.A.S.B.*, XXIV, 20-21; Westmacott, *J.A.S.B.*, IV, 190-91; *J.A.R.S.*, VIII, 43-49.
300. Hannay, *J.A.S.B.*, XVII, I, pp. 459f.
301. *Arthaśāstra*, VII, 6, 10.
301a. Reference may be made to the defeat of the Gauḍa ruler Rājyapāla by Ratnapāla in a great battle, as stated in the Gāchtal grant of Gopāla.

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war, as given in the *Arthaśāstra*, by which enemies were harassed to the extent of starving them to death. When Bakhtiyar invaded Kāmarūpa after his Tibetan campaign not a blade of grass or a stick of firewood could be found on the way, as the inhabitants of the passes set fire to them. Not a pound of food or a blade of grass could be found for their horses and cattle, and his followers had to kill their horses and eat them. When he reached the stone bridge on the Brahmaputra, his followers found the arches of the bridge destroyed. He was, therefore, compelled to take shelter in a temple, and as soon as the king of Kāmarūpa realised the helpless position of the Muslim army, he gave orders to his soldiers to build a stockade round the temple. The Muslims at last asked counsel from their leader, saying thus: "if we remain like this we shall all have fallen into the trap of these infidels". Then making a rush and attacking one corner of the stockade, they made their way out, but the Kāmarūpa soldiers followed them and destroyed the whole force.[302] This is a fine illustration of the fighting method of the soldiers of Assam. In any case, geography played an important part in the defence of the kingdom, unlike other parts of India, and the soldiers displayed no mean heroism. To kill or to be killed in wars in defence of their country was never considered unrighteous but rather an act of special duty, and in doing this the Assamese soldiers followed only the injunctions of the texts.[303]

We have references to the types of weapons used in actual warfare. Kauṭilya speaks of various types, such as *śakti*, *śūla*, *tomara* (iron club), *bhindivāla*, (javelin) and *gadā*, besides swords, bows and arrows, in addition to armour of iron and skin.[304] Most of these were used in Assam. The Assam tribes, in particular, have always been expert archers, and most of them poison their arrows with aconite. Collections of their spears, arrows, swords, javelins and shields of hide, wood and bamboo in the Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford and the British Museum, London, give an idea of their extensive use.[305] The Doobi grant (vv. 48-50) mentions sword, spear, discus, javelin, sharp arrows and other deadly weapons. Indrapāla was a great archer (*dhanurdhara*).[306] The Khonāmukhi grant (v. 13)refers to Dharmapāla's swordsmanship. Vallabhadeva is credited with the mastery of the art of archery.[307] We have already mentioned that Himāṅga

302. Raverty, *Tabaqāt-i-Nāsirī*, pp. 569f; *Riyāz-us-Salātin*, pp. 65f.
303. cf. *Śānti Parvan*, XCV, 7f.
304. *Arthaśāstra*, Bk. II, XVIII.
305. See The British Museum Hand-book to the Ethnographical Collections, 1910, pp. 51, 85.
306. Guākuchi grant (*K.S.*, p. 139).
307. Assam plates of Vallabhadeva, V, 12.

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was expert in archery.[308] The use of the *churikā* (dagger) is proved by the grant of Vallabhadeva.[309] On the basis of the *Arthaśāstra*, some writers point to the use of fire arms in ancient India.[310] But the weight of evidence proves that the use of cannons and gun-powder was unknown until comparatively later times. The manufacture of gun-powder, however, in Assam perhaps during the Ahom period, is proved by a number of authorities. P.R.T. Gurdon writes that the Khāsis knew the art of manufacturing gun-powder from saltpetre, sulphur and charcoal. It may be mentioned that the Jaintīā Rājās had cannons.[311] Tavernier observes "that these people (Assamese) in ancient times first discovered gun-powder and guns, which passed from Assam to Pegu and from Pegu to China; this is the reason why the discovery is generally ascribed to the Chinese". He adds that the "gun-powder made in that country is excellent"[312]. We have no reference to the use of shields, but the tribes carry shields of hide, wood and bamboo during their raids. The use of the war-drum, though it does not find mention in epigraphs, is mentioned in literature, which refers to various types of drum, such as *bherī*, *ḍaṅkā*, *dundubhi*, *jayaḍhāka*, *rāmabherī* and others.[313] The use of banners (*dhvaja* and *patākā*) is mentioned in the Bargāon grant in connection with the demarcation of boundaries of lands.[314]

(V) *Army Officers:* We have mentioned a few petty officers like *hastibandhaka*, *naubandhaka*, *naurajjuka* and others. As we have stated, the rulers went to war in person and they usually took a leading part in the organisation of the army. They were probably helped by a war minister. The *Saciva*, mentioned in the Kamauli grant, was, according to Kāmandaka (XII) the minister of war with a number of military duties. Vaidyadeva served as a war minister under Kumārapāla of Gauḍa and fought against Tiṅgyadeva.[315] Under the war minister there was a commander-in-chief or general. The Nidhanpur grant mentions Śrī Gopāla as issuing a hundred commands and as qualified with five great sounds: (*prāptapañcamahāśabda*). He was staying with Bhāskara in *Karṇasuvarṇa* as the general of the army. The title *pañcamahāśabda* was probably conferred on him by Bhāskara because of his heroism in his war against Śaśāṅka.

308. Śubhaṅkarapāṭaka grant, V 20.
309. *E.I.*, V, pp. 181f.
310. See J. C. Ghosh, *I.H.Q.*, VII, 703-708; VIII, 267-271, 583-588.
311. See *The Khāsis*, pp. 23f.
312. *Travels*, II, 217; *Voyages de J.B. Tavernier*, II, pp. 427f; R. Maclagan, *On Early Asiatic Fire Weapons*, *J.A.S.B.*, XLV, I, pp. 30-71.
313. cf. *Kālikā Purāṇa*, VI, V 40; Mādhavadeva, *Ādikāṇḍa* (*Rāmāyaṇa*).
314. Lines 38f.
315. Kamauli grant, VV 10-14.

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The expression *pañcamahāśabda* has been variously explained. On the basis of the *Rājataraṅgiṇī*, Bühler, Kielhorn and Stein hold that it stands for five great titles, preceded by *mahā*.[316] U. N. Ghoshal thinks that it stands for a distinguished official, and that an attempt was made to create a superior grade of officers in order to introduce efficiency in administration.[317] P. Bhattacharya holds that it stands for five officers preceded by *mahā*.[318] But the weight of evidence, particularly the *Mānasollāsa*,[319] proves that the expression stands for five musical sounds and that it was often the privilege of using five musical instruments by the vassal rulers, conferred on them as a mark of distinction by their sovereign.[320] Gopāla, who was the general of the army in *Karṇasuvarṇa*, may have received the privilege of using five musical instruments from his master Bhāskara, since he was the supreme commander of the army, next to the king and the war minister, if he was not the war minister himself, like Vaidyadeva, before his accession to the throne.[321]

The Hayuṅthāl grant mentions Śrī-Guṇa as *Mahāsenāpati* who was also the supreme commander of the army under Harjjara.[322] Contemporary records prove that the *Mahāsenāpati* was at the head of the army, next to the king and the war minister.[323] There were other officers like *Senādhyakṣa* and *Balādhyakṣa*, posts which were held by feudatory chiefs. The post of the former was inferior to that of the *Mahāsenāpati* and the latter was inferior in rank to *Senādhyakṣa*. They were probably in command of the different units of the army in the country parts. This is revealed by the Tezpur Rock epigraph of Harjjara, which mentions Sucitta as the *Mahāsāmanta Senādhyakṣa* and Citragharadakṣa as the *Sāmanta Balādhyakṣa*.[324] The *Rāṇakas* and *Nāyakas* of the grants were probably minor chiefs with military duties. There were others in charge of the different units of the army; but the details are lacking.

6. Administrative divisions and Local administration :

The detailed working of the local administration is not definitely known. The scanty materials that we have, indicate that an attempt

316. *Rājataraṅgiṇī*, IV, 140, 680.
317. *Krishnasvāmī Aiyangar Com. Volume*, pp. 30-32.
318. *K.S.*, p. 42 (f.n. 1).
319. 3/12/36, ed. G.K. Shrigondekar, II, p. 114 (G.O.S., Baroda, 1939).
320. *C.I.I.*, III, pp. 296-98; W. Elliot, *I.A.*, V, p. 251; S.K. Aiyangar, *J.R.A.S.* (Bombay), I, (N.S.), pp. 238-48; Beni Prasad, *State in Ancient India*, pp. 383-84.
321. *E.I.*, II, pp. 347f.
322. *J.A.R.S.*, I, 109f.
323. Altekar, *State & Government in Ancient India*, p. 145.
324. *J.B.O.R.S.*, 1917, pp. 508-514.

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was made to build the edifice upon local autonomy, at least in principle. The extension of the frontiers of the kingdom on all sides necessitated administrative divisions, and the rulers may have followed the traditional system of ancient India, which "was built upon the basis of decentralisation on principle" and extended certain amount of autonomy to the units.[325] But in practice, on most occasions, political powers were curtailed in the local units, including the feudatory States, and the sources "do not in general suggest a vigorous system of rural self-government".[326] This was true at least of Assam; free institutions and assemblies had little political power, and the various units of administration enjoyed less autonomy.[327] The local grants prove that the rulers tried their utmost to exert their influence by issuing *śāsanas*, by which orders were communicated not only to the royal officers and the feudatories, but also to the officers of the district and other units.[328] The infringement of the regulation or *śāsanas* was properly dealt with.[329]

(i) *Bigger divisions* : The kingdom was divided into *bhuktis*, *maṇḍalas*, *viṣayas*, *puras*, *agrahāras* (group of villages) and *grāmas*. The term *deśa*, occurring in the grants probably does not stand for an administrative unit. Expressions like *Uttarakūladeśa* and *Dakṣiṇakūladeśa* are found in the inscriptions of Balavarman (Nowgong grant), Ratnapāla (Bargāon grant) and Indrapāla (Gauhāti grant); but these denote merely the regions lying on the northern and southern banks of the Brahmaputra. Like Kauṭilya and Manu,[330] the *Viṣṇusaṁhitā*[331] takes *deśa* as an administrative unit; but in Assam it was not a political division.

The *bhukti* was perhaps the largest division, and the term, as with the Guptas, was used in the sense of a province; the *Puṇḍravardhanabhukti*[332] for instance, under the Guptas, comprised the modern districts of Dinājpur, Bogra and Rājshāhi.[333] That the *bhukti* was the largest unit in Assam, is proved by the Kamauli grant, which contains the phrase: (*Śrī-Prāgjyotiṣa-bhuktau Kāmarūpa-maṇḍale Bāḍā-viśaye.*)[334] It is of interest

325. See R.K. Mookerji, *Chandragupta Maurya and His Times*, p. 77.
326. See Ghoshal, *The Beginnigs of Indian Historiography*, pp. 137-38.
327. Cf. Hopkins, *The Social & Military position of the Ruling Caste in Ancient India*, *J.A.O.S.*, XIII, pp. 17f; Ghoshal, *Ibid.*
328. Nowgong grant; Bargāon grant etc.
329. *J.B.O.R.S.*, 1917, pp. 508-514.
330. VII, 114-115.
331. *Chap.* III, 5.
332. *E.I.*, XV, pp. 129f.
333. Altekar, *State & Government in Ancient India*, p. 157.
334. *E.I.*, II, p. 353.

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that about the beginning of the 12th century A.D. Prāgjyotiṣa and Kāmarūpa, which stood for the kingdom or the modern province of Assam, were known as a *bhukti* and a *maṇḍala*; as we shall show, Kāmarūpa was also known as a *viṣaya* in the beginning of the 10th century A.D.[335] It appears that during the 12th century A.D., the kingdom had far expanded beyond the bounds of the Prāgjyotiṣa or Kāmarūpa of former times; but it is to be noted that the kingdom of Bhāskara, for instance, was known only as Kāmarūpa, though it was definitely larger than that of Vaidyadeva. This seems to indicate that during Bhāskara's time the kingdom was not divided into administrative divisions, or if it was divided at all, we have no evidence of any divisions larger than the *viṣaya*. It appears likely that during Vaidyadeva's time, the *bhukti Prāgjyotiṣa* which included the *viṣaya Kāmarūpa* stood for the Central unit or home province.[335a] The *yuvarājas* of the grants, associated with the administration of their fathers,[336] may have served as governors of the *bhuktis*, as in many other kingdoms of the time. The details of their administration are not known

The *maṇḍala*, as appears from the grant of Vaidyadeva, was the next administrative division. The grant of Vallabhadeva mentions the *Hāpyocā maṇḍala* lying to the east of *Kīrtipura*.[337] The exact location of the place is uncertain; but, as suggested by Kielhorn, if it can be identified with *Hāpyoma* of the Gauhāti grant of Indrapāla, *Hāpyocā* can be located in modern Darrang. In the inscriptions of the Cholas, *maṇḍala* stands for a provincial unit, comprising two or three modern districts.[338] In Assam, *maṇḍala* consisted of many *viṣayas*, the next administrative division. Inscriptions mention a number of *viṣayas*, such as *Chandrapurī*,[339] *Dijjinā*,[340] *Hāpyoma*,[341] *Pūraji*, *Bāḍā*,[342] *Kāmarūpa*[343] (grant of the Gaṅga King Anantavarman A.D. 922),[344] *Mandi*,[345] etc. The *Viṣaya* was under a

335. *E.I.*, XXVI, pp. 62-68.

335a. The Kamauli grant was issued perhaps at a time when Vaidyadeva was yet to make conquests in the eastern direction to place himsilf on a secured position as a paramount power in Kāmarūpa, the frontiers of which extended far beyond its traditional limits.

336. Gauhāti grant, VV 11-13; Hayuṅthāl grant; Tezpur grant of Vanamāla.

337. *E.I.*, V pp. 181-88.

338. Altekar, *State & Government in Ancient India*, p. 158; Dikshitar, *Hindu Administrative Institutions*, p. 357.

339. Nidhanpur grant.

340. Nowgong grant; Śubhaṅkarapāṭaka grant.

341. Gauhāti grant.

342. Khonāmukhi grant; Puṣpabhadrā grant. Also Uttarbarbil grant of Balavarman and Gāchtal grant of Gopāla.

343. Kamauli grant of Vaidyadeva.

344. *E.I.*, XXVI, pp. 62-68.

345. Guākuchi grant.

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viṣayapati. The *Viṣayapati* of *Chandrapurī*, Śrīkṣikuṇḍa, is called a *Nāyaka*. The officer *Nāyaka*, according to Śukra, was in charge of ten *grāmas*.[346] So the *Chandrapurī viṣaya-Nāyaka* Śrīkṣikuṇḍa was equivalent to *viṣayapati* of the contemporary inscriptions.[347] He had his *adhikaraṇa* (office) at his *adhisthāna* (headquarters) and was helped by several officers. He was perhaps helped by an advisory body or council as in the centre; but the details are not known. As the grants show, the king communicated his *śāsana*, donating lands , through the local officials to the people of the country parts. The king thereby tried to keep all local officers under control.

(ii) *Administration of towns* (*pura*) : We have scanty information about the administration of the cities and towns, which were known as *pura* and *nagara*. Cities and towns were not only the seats of government (*adhikaraṇa*) but also sometimes victorious camps: (*jayaskandhāvāra*),[348] places of temporary ancestral residence (*paitāmahakaṭaka*),[349] forts and centres of all activities. According to Kauṭilya, the choice of the capital and its site was very important, and geographical, commerical and political factors had to be taken into consideration.[350] Śukra holds that the capital must have an easy access to the sea.[351]

The cities mentioned in literature and grants, such as *Prāgjyotiṣapura*[352] *Hārūppeśvara*,[353] *Durjayā*[354] and *Kāmarūpanagara*,[355] fulfilled all these conditions, being situated on the bank of the Brahmaputra. The cities were well fortified. The prosperous well fortified city of Prāgjyotiṣa finds mention in the extant records beginning with the Epics.[356] The beautiful cities of Hārūppeśvara and Durjayā, according to the epigraphs, had well-decorated and

346. *Śukra Nīti*, I, 190f.
347. Kauṭilya sometimes uses *Nāyaka* in the sense of a *Nāgaraka*: (II, XII; II, XXXVI) but in our records the former certainly stands for a *Viṣayapati*.
348. Nidhanpur grant; Hayuṅthāl grant.
349. *J.A.S.B.*, LXVI, I, pp. 285f.
350. *Arthaśāstra*, Bks. II, III, VII.
351. *Śukra*, I, 212-15; IV, 4, 52-56.
352. Nowgong grant, V 5.
353. Tezpur grant, V 30. In the *Parbatīyā* plates, the name is *Haḍappeśvara*. and in the Gāchtal grant it is *Haḍapyaka*.
354. Gauhāti grant, V 19; Bargāon grant, lines 28f.
355. Puṣpabhadrā grant, V 20.
356. *Ādikāṇḍa*, 35; *Kiṣkindhyākāṇḍa*, 42; *Sabhā*, XLVII; *Vana*, XII; *Udyoga*, XLVII; *Śānti*, CCCXLI; *Harivaṁśa*, CXXI-CXXIII.

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extensive buildings, royal palaces and white-washed temples.[357] The *Yoginī Tantra* gives a graphic description of the city of Hājo (*Apunarbhava*),[358] along with the *Hayagrīva-Viṣṇu* worship in *Maṇikūṭa*. The cities and towns were inhabited by learned men, preceptors, poets, artisans and the like.[359] The royal roads and public paths were numerous and apparently conformed to the injunctions of the texts.[360] The records mention streets and roads of different kinds by such terms as *rājamārga*, *catuṣpatha*, *rathyā* and *vīthī*.[361] The merchants and feudatories moved in the streets mounted on elephants or horses or carried on litters.[362] Towns and villages were well-connenctcd by roads; streets were busy with heavy traffic and commercial transactions and there were numerous shops, displaying varied articles in the capital city.[363]

All important towns provided good amenities to the inhabitants in the form of pleasure gardens, beautiful groves and other places of amusement. Inscriptions mention them as *ārāmas* and *upavanas* where deer and peacocks moved freely.[364] In Haḍappeśvara and Durjayā there were a large number of lotus ponds and its banks were made beautiful by flocks of birds and varieties of flowers.[365] There were fine gardens and groves of areca palms and betel vines, black aloe wood and cardamon creepers in Prāgjyotiṣa, Haḍappeśvara and other important towns.[366] These, as mentioned by Yuan Chwang, were irrigated by channels, led from tanks and rivers, which flowed round the principal towns of Kāmarūpa.[367]

As we have stated, our knowledge of the municipal administration is meagre. It might have been one of the important duties of the city officers to afford protection to all, as given in the Hindu texts,[368] which also refer to important regulations concerning health and sanitation in

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357. Nowgong grant, V 14; Bargāon grant, lines 28f.
358. II, 4, 9; also *K.P.*, 78/82.
359. Bargāon grant, lines 31f; Parbatīyā plates of Vanamāla.
360. *Śukra*, I, 212-15, 259-63; IV, 52-56; *Yājñavalkya*, I, 134; *Arthaśāstra*, III, 10; VII, 12; *Kāmandaka*, XIV, 24-41.
361. *K.S.*, p. 180; *J.A.S.B.*, IX, II, 766f; Parbatīyā plates.
362. Tezpur grant of Vanamāla, VV 30f.
363. Bargāon grant of Ratnapāla, lines, 38f.
364. Tezpur grant, V 28; Nowgong grant, V 6.
365. Bargāon grant, lines 36-37. The *K.P.* (69/54-80) and the *Y.T.* (II/7/191-93) give a long list of varieties of flowers, and auspicious leaves of trees in connection with the worship of deities.
366. Nowgong grant, V 5; *C.I.I.*, III, pp. 200-8.
367. Watters, II, pp. 185f; *Si yu ki*, II, p. 196.
368. cf. *Āpastambha*, II, 10, 26.

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towns.[369] Our records do not mention particular officers in charge of urban administration. Kauṭilya speaks of the *Nāgaraka* as governor of a city, which was watched on all sides by watchmen;[370] Śukra mentions among the staff, the president, magistrate, collector, officer in charge of tolls and other dues, sentinel and a clerk to maintain vital statistics.[371] Kauṭilya's *Nāgaraka* had onerous duties;[372] but in Assam, his duties are not defined in any of the records; nor do we know if he was helped by other officers or by a council of elders.

(iii) *Village Administration* (*grāma*) : The lowest unit of the administration in every part of India since the evolution of the Indo-Aryan Polity was the village;[373] but about this also our information is meagre. The grāma consisted of *vāstu* (lands for building houses), *kṣetra* (arable land), *khila* (waste land), *gopracārābhūmi* (cattle pastures), forests, water, etc. These are mentioned in many grants,[374] as given in Hindu texts.[375] Inscriptions mention a number of grāmas, such as *Abhiśūravāṭaka*, *Heṅsivā*, *Trayodaśa*, *Haposa*, *Bhaviṣā*, *Kañjiā*, *Guheśvara Digḍola*, *Chāḍi*,[376] etc. The *agrahāras* of the grants, like the *Mayūraśālmalāgrahāra*[377] and *Śṛṅgāṭikāgrahāra*[378] were perhaps made up of many village settlements. Inscriptions also mention small divisions like *pāṭaka*, *koñcī* and *palli*, such as *Kāśī pāṭaka*,[379] *Vāmadeva pāṭaka*, *Vapādeva*,[380] *Devunikoñcī*,[381] *Khyātipalli*,[382] etc. The area of a *pāṭaka* is uncertain. Under the Mauryas, the term *pāṭhaka* denoted a subdivision of a *viṣaya*;[383] but it was not so used in Assam. *Pāṭaka* is usually taken to be a part of a village, or an outlying portion of a village, or a kind of hamlet, having a name of its

369. cf. *Arthaśāstra*, IV, I; *Yājñavalkya*, I, 138; *Śukra*, II, 37-47; *Manu*, VIII, 395; *Vaśiṣṭha*, II, 13.
370. *Arthaśāstra*, II, XXXVI.
371. II, 121-23.
372. *Arthaśāstra*, II, 36.
373. See Childe, *The Aryans*, p. 82f; B. Powell, *Indian Village Community*, p. 74; Pran Nath, *Economic Condition*, *Intro.*, p. 4 and 26-33.
374. Nowgong grant, line 36; Bargāon grant, 56, etc.
375. *Arthaśāstra*, II; *Baudhāyana*, III, I; *S.B.E.*, II, p. 223; IX, 65; XIV, 243-44.
376. Tezpur grant; Nowgong grant; Bargāon grant; Gauhāti grant; Śubhaṅkarapāṭaka grant; Puṣpabhadrā grant; Plates of Vallabhadeva; Parbatīyā Plates of Vanamāla.
377. Nidhanpur grant.
378. *E.I.*, XXVI, p. 62-68.
379. Gauhāti grant.
380. Bargāon grant of Ratnapāla; Uttarbarbil Plates of Balavarman.
381. Plates of Vallabhadeva. Also *Khārikoṇākoñcī* of the Gāchtal grant.
382. Puṣpabhadrā grant.
383. Altekar, *State & Govt. in Ancient India*, p. 156.

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own, but belonging to a larger village.[384] This is confirmed by the *Abhidhānacintāmaṇi* which explains the term as one half of a village: (*pāṭakastu tadardhe syāt*).[385] That *pāṭaka* constituted only a part of a village, is shown by the local grants, we have mentioned. The *palli* means a row or group of houses, or hamlet, and *koñcī* (modern *kucī*) may have stood for a part of a village, or a small village inhabited by members of a class or caste, such as *Gaṇakakucī* (inhabited only by the *Daivajñas*). The terms *palli* and *kumbha* in the sense of one half and one fourth of a village respectively occur in some texts.[386]

We have little information about the village officials and their functions. Ordinarily they had to discharge civil, revenue and other duties, and were responsible for the internal safety of the village under their jurisdiction. As appears from the grants, the king sent *śāsanas* to the heads and respectable inhabitants of the villages and the country parts through the *Viṣayapati*. It is also evident from the same source that the king sent royal officers occasionally to supervise and help them in their work of administration. The village headman was perhaps helped by an advisory body or a council of elders. The *jyeṣṭhabhadrān* of the grants, to whom the royal *śāsanas* were communicated through the *viṣayapati*, were no doubt the elders of villages, and they may have constituted something like the *Pañcāyat* system. Sometimes they may have been represented in the unofficial body or council of the *viṣayapati*.

Inscriptions also make important mention of the leading men of the *janapada* (*pramukhya-jānapadān*), to whom the king sent his greetings and commands in connection with land-grants. It is difficult to say who they were. Manu seems to refer to the *Jānapadān* as an institution which, with others, such as a *kula*, *śreṇī*, etc., was to be helped by the king in its working.[387] More or less the same institutions are mentioned by *Yājñavalkya*.[388] Hoernle takes *jānapadān* of the grants simply as common people.[389] In the *Arthaśāstra* (II), *janapada* is taken as a kingdom, country parts or as a village. Pran Nath, on the basis of the same work, maintains that *janapada* is "employed in an administrative sense and denotes a territorial

384. *I.A.*, XVIII, p. 135.
385. *Abhidhānacintāmaṇi* (Böhtingk's edition), p. 135.
386. *Śukra*, I, 193.
387. *Manu*, VIII, 41: (*jāti jānapadān dharmān śreṇī dharmāśca dharmavit / kuladharmāśca svadharmaṁ pratipādayet//*
388. I, 361, II, 192: (*kulāni jātiḥ śreṇīśca gaṇān jānapadānapi / svadharmāñjālitān rājā vinīya sthāpayet pathi//*
389. *J.A.S.B.* LXVI, I. pp. 131f.

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division", that "*janapadas* enjoyed the position of self-supporting independent states", and that "in the time of Kauṭilya the *janapada* was the unit of local administration".[390] But, *janapada* is often used as opposed to *pura* and may either stand for a country-part or a village. So, in that sense it appears likely that the *pramukhya-jānapadān* were the heads or leading members of villages. It is also probable that they sometimes constituted an unofficial body or represented the villages in the council of *Viṣayapati*, as they did under the Guptas.

(iv) *Classes and Guilds* : Inscriptions[391] also mention other classes and castes, who were protected by rulers according to the injunctions of the texts.[392] The creation of *agrahāras*, exclusively for the Brāhmaṇas with their own social code led to the growth of their class solidarity, which had to be recognised by the State. In villages or parts of villages people of the same class or caste like the astrologers (*Daivajñas*)[393] settled, and gave their names to those parts they inhabited. They also evolved their own customs which may have been regulated by the State. The grants (Śubhaṅkarapāṭaka, lines 49, 54-55) mention settlements of weavers : (*caturvvimśati tantrāṇāṁ bhūsīmni* and *oraṅgi tantrāṇāṁ bhūsīmni*), and they must have constituted something like the guilds. There are also references to (*vaṇik*) merchants as a class.[394] These classes and guilds were not only interested in their economic pursuits, but also that they sometimes took an important part in such a political ceremony as the *abhiṣeka*.[395] These castes, classes, and guilds had, therefore, an important influence in administration, and probably enjoyed, like those in other parts in India,[396] a certain measure of independence. This autonomy of socio-economic groups, guided by their own customs, is still to be seen in the Vaiṣṇava *satras* of Assam, due recognition to which has been given by the State laws.[397] These institutions or the centres of the village political and social life decide their own disputes and deal with culprits according to their own notion of law and justice. Group solidarity and democrative

390. *Economic Condition*, etc., *Intro.*, 3-4, 35f, 45-46; Altekar for a different view: (*State and Government in Ancient India*).
391. Nowgong grant, V 7, L 34f; Tezpur grant; V 30; Gauhāti grant, V 18.
392. Yājñavalkya, II. 192.
393. Kamauli grant, V 8.
394. Bargāon grant, lines 31-33; Hayuṅthāl grant.
395. Hayuṅthāl grant, VV 13-14.
396. See R.C. Majumdar, *Corporate Life in Ancient India*, pp. 11f; R.K. Mookerji, *Local Government in Ancient India*, pp. 20f; Fick, *Social Organisation in N.E. India*, pp. 275f.
397. See B. Rajkhowa, *Short Account of Assam*, pp. 127f.

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principles are even more effective among the tribes of Assam, and these, with local variations, may be conceded to the rural units, as envisaged under the present political system.[397a]

7. Conclusion :

To conclude, the administration of ancient Assam was essentially run on the traditional lines of ancient India. Though the rulers exerted their influence over other units of administration, this influence was not pushed to the extreme, and the laws were based more or less upon the Hindu texts. The foregoing treatment does not justify the conclusion of a modern writer "that Assam was crushed under despotic rule" both under the "Āhom and previous dynasties".[398] To quote L.W. Shakespear, "this remote part of India in ancient times enjoyed a superior form of government to any it has since experienced, until taken over by the English."[399]

397a. Some measure of autonomy has, under the present *Prişad* system, been granted to the rural units of administration ; but it is yet to be made effectively real for the benefit of the people at large.

398. Hunter, *Statistical Account of Assam*, I, p. 43; Robinson. *Descriptive Account of Assam*, pp. 196f.

399. *History of Upper Assam*, etc., pp. 59f.

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CHAPTER VI

CULTURAL HISTORY

SECTION 1

SOCIAL LIFE

1. Preliminary remarks :

Human culture is a synthetic whole, and the cultural history of any people comprises all aspects of their social, economic, educational, religious, artistic and other activities. Assamese culture is the sum total of the crude and advanced elements associated with these aspects of human life. It is mistaken to think that the primitive elements surviving from the prehistoric period have had nothing to contribute to the complex system. Indian culture as a whole has received various cross currents from the dawn of her history. We are to investigate the origin and foundation of the culture of the prehistoric and primitive men who left their substratum in the Assamese civilisation, though we must depend for such investigation for their most part on survivals.[1] Human culture itself is evolutionary and progressive and we may take the prehistoric and primitive men as a guide to the study of that evolution.[2] The lower culture in fact "is the basis of human societies",[3] and there is no "human thought so primitive as to have lost its bearing on our thought, nor so ancient as to have broken its connection with our own life".[4] In other words, for a true understanding of the composite culture of the Assamese in ancient times, we must go into the origin and gradual developments of some of the important features, contributed both by the pre-Aryans and Aryans, more by the former than the latter element.

It is evident from the existing materials that prehistoric men in the palaeolithic age were savage hunters, living in caves.[5] It is likely that,

1. E.B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, I, pp. 17f.
2. *Ibid*; Rivers, *Dreams and Primitive Culture*, p. 24.
3. T.C. Hodson, *Primitive Culture of India*, p. 128.
4. Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, II, p. 452.
5. V. Smith, *Oxford History of India*, I.

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as in Southern India, some caves in Assam were haunted by prehistoric men. Living merely on hunting, they knew nothing about agriculture and other allied arts.[6] B. Foote, however, finds evidence of the use of fire in Southern India,[7] and it is possible that they produced fire with the help of stone, wood or bamboo thong, as is done even to-day by some Assam tribes. It was after some time that they discovered the use of chipped stones, and towards the end of the period, when they changed their nomadic life, the necessity of protection against wild beasts led them to live in small groups, marked perhaps by crude exogamy, totemism and magic rites including the practice of human and buffalo sacrifices and a rudimentary form of matriarchy. The practice of exposure of the dead is also attributed to them.[8] Rudiments of their cave art have been noticed in Assam, as in Central and Southern India.[9]

The neolithic men introduced the art of cultivation, various crafts, trade, domestication of animals and pastoral economy, along with the use of polished stone implements. The existence of a joint tribal and family system, based on the patriarchate, has also been suggested.[10] The division of the people into exogamous units, the basis perhaps of the Aryan Hindu caste or class system, was developed, and the idea of holding different professions was evolved. Their painted pottery, like their weapons and cave art, was of an advanced type. The specimens from Assam give us an idea of the nature and extent of that culture.[11] The custom of the burial of the dead along with food and other articles and the practice of the erection of megaliths were well-known to them.[12] Both these customs are practised even now by most of the Assam tribes.

As society began to advance to the age of metal, an advanced economic life differentaited its culture from the earlier stages. Remarkable progress was made in all spheres before the Aryans developed their system; for even the vedic *ṛṣis* speak of the economic wealth and prosperity of the non-Aryans.[13] Besides a number of geographical factors, the Aryan contact with the non-Aryans contributed to the development of this socio-economic

6. See S.K. Das, *Economic History of Ancient India*, pp. 5f.
7. *Indian Prehistoric and Proto-historic Antiquities*, p. 11.
8. P.T.S. Aiyangar, *Stone Age in India*, pp. 10-24.
9. Foote, *Antiquities*, pp. 188-89.
10. *Stone Age in India*, pp. 26f.
11. P.C. Choudhury, '*Neolithic Culture in Kāmarūpa*', *J.A.R.S.*, 1944, pp. 41-47.
12. Aiyangar, *Stone Age in India*, pp. 26-39.
13. *R.V.* III, 34, 9; also B. Powell, *Indian Village Community*, p. 84.

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system.[14] The socio-economic divisions of the people, as found in the Vedas,[15] brought about a new change in their life and divided them into occupational groups. The influence of heredity on economic pursuits worked strongly upon the social structure, forming the basis of the subsequent class or caste system and leading to the formation of sub-groups.[16] It was, therefore, in the economic sphere that phenomenal changes and progress were introduced, as the people passed from the lithic stage to the age of metal.[17] Working in metal in ancient Assam is evidenced by a number of sources. The washing of gold from the rivers and the smelting of iron rocks, particularly in the Khāsi Hills, have been practised for a long time past, and the non-Aryan elements had a great deal to contribute to the development of these techniques. There is evidence also of the existence of a medium of exchange side by side with barter before the coming of the Aryans, and the unit of value consisted at first of animal skins; but in the pastoral stage the animal itself became a sort of currency and in that of the age of agriculture, a number of products, such as garments, goat skins, cowries, etc., passed as currency. In Assam till comparatively recent times among the tribes, the value of things has been measured in terms of animal heads, spear heads, metal bowls and other metallic tokens. The system of barter side by side with exchange of articles for money is still carried on by people both of the plains and the hills.

Not only in the socio-economic sphere but also in the more important branch of the religious beliefs, nay in the whole field of Indian culture, the non-Aryans and the pre-Aryans have really contributed to and laid the foundation of modern Hinduism, whether in India or Assam, and many survivals of non-Aryan cults may still be traced.[18] It is difficult, however, to hazard at present the respective contributions made by the various elements, nor is it justified to claim that Indian civilisation owes substantially to the Dravidians, as believed by some writers.[19] R. Caldwell however, points to the Aryan influence on the Dravidians from very early times.[20] Even the Negritos are said to have developed the cult

14. See N.C. Bandopadhyaya, *Economic Life and Progress in Ancient India*, pp. 5f, 37f, 80f.

15. *R.V.* VII, 35, 16-18 and I, 113, 6.

16. Bandopadhyaya, pp. 102f.

17. See P. Mitra, *Pre-historic India*, pp. 245f.

18. See P. Mitra, *Pre-historic India*, Preface, IX; S.K. De, The '*Beginnings of Indian Civilisation*' (Monthly Bulletin, *Rāmakṛṣṇa Mission Inst. of* (Culture). II (No.10), Oct. 1951, p. 152.

19. See H.R. Hall, *Ancient History of the Near East*, p. 174.

20. *Grammar of the Dravidian Languages*, pp. 113f.

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of the fig tree, a crude fertility cult, the invention of the bow, the idea of the soul of the dead, and a belief in the path of the dead to paradise. Most of these beliefs are found among the Assam tribes.[21] These were no doubt further developed by later comers, such as the Proto-Austroloids, who laid the foundation of a neolithic culture, and introduced the use of pottery and the blow-gun in Southern India; a degenerated form of the latter is found in Assam, together with the idea of totemism.[22] In the opinion of Hutton, the snake cult and the worship of the Mother Goddess were probably brought in by the earlier invaders of the Mediterranean or Armenoid race, speaking a Dravidian language, whose religion is also associated with the cult of fertility, phallic worship, the *Devadāsī* cult and probably human sacrifice, the idea of the soul, solar and lunar cults, cult of the dead, and ancestor worship.[23] Even the conception of *karma* and the transmigration of souls, the practice of *yoga* and the ideas centering round *Viṣṇu*, *Śiva* and *Devī*, the rituals of *pūjā* , as opposed to *homa* and a large number of the Hindu myths, marriage rituals, etc., have been taken as survivals of the pre-Aryans.[24] It is difficult, however, to posit that a particular element is derived from this or that culture, but the non-Aryan foundation of Indian culture and modern Hinduism itself cannot be doubted. Hutton, perhaps rightly, summarises his findings in stating that besides the Negritos, the Proto-Austroloids contributed to the totemic theory and the Mediterranean-Irānian-Kolerian evolved their phallic and megalithic culture along with the life-essence theory, the idea of re-incarnation and the worship of the Mother Goddess. The later comers superseded the fertility and the soul matter cult by one of personified deities and their worship, and established the phallic cult, the cult of *Devadāsīs*, the belief in heavenly bodies, and the priestly institutions. The final form of the modern Hinduism was determined by a conflict of what may be called proto-Hinduism in its religious aspect with ideas brought by Irānian-Aryan, to whom it had to concede much, socially, culminating in the socio-religious position of the priests in India.[25]

2. Nature of Assam's culture—extent of non-Aryan and pre-Aryan contributions :

The foundation of Assamese culture was perhaps laid by all these elements, including the Austro-Asiatic, with their linguistic legacy, and

21. J.H. Hutton, *C.R.I.*, 1931, I, I, pp. 443f; *Caste in India*, pp. 195f.
22. *Ibid*; also S.C. Roy, *Man in India*, XVII, pp. 159f, 245.
23. *C.R.I.*, 1931, I. I, pp. 394f.
24. S.K. Chatterji, *Indo-Aryan and Hindi*, pp. 131-32.
25. Hutton, *C.R.I.*, 1931, I, I, pp. 392f; *Caste in India*, 195f.

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the Alpine-Aryan-Tibeto-Burman elements, contributing to the development of a heterogeneous socio-religious complex. We have grounds for believing that the Alpines played a conspicuous part in the evolution of the culture of Eastern India, and, mixing with other elements, influenced every aspect of the life of the people. Survivals of Alpine culture may still be noticed in Assam throughout the whole socio-religious structure, which is based both upon crude magic and advanced religious ideas. While the tribal elements owe a great deal for the origin of their culture to the earlier elements, including the Negritos, Austro-Asiatics and the Tibeto-Burmans, the civilisation of the valley is fundamentally based on the Alpine-Aryan system. The survivals of the Austric and the Tibeto-Burman culture may be noticed particularly in the names of places, rivers and other physical features throughout Assam. Even the names like Assam, *Kāmarūpa*, *Kāmākhyā*, *Prāgjyotiṣa*, *Lauhitya*, *Karatoyā*, etc., have an Austric or Boḍo origin, indicating an early contact of the non-Aryan and Aryan cultures.

A river name like Dhanśiri may be derived from an Austric formation like *siro-soro*, meaning flowing as from a channel; in Boḍo, *disor* means to flow and *sor* signifies crawling. The word *Saumāra* has an Austric origin, derived from the Khāsi, *sum* (to bathe); Austric *semir* (turbid water); Muṇḍa-Sant-Khās, *um* (water). *Hayagrīva* has the same Austric origin, *haya* means red, and in Khāsi, *haim-haim* means very red; *Hayagrīva*, therefore, means having a red neck. Harjjara, the name of a ruler, has an Austric derivation, the word, '*hara*' meaning a hill. *Hārūppeśvara*, the name of a town, may be derived from the same source; Tezpur, a modern town may be derived from the Austric, *tijo*, meaning a snake. Darraṅg, the name of a modern division has an Austric derivation, meaning a bridge and *hong* or *ong*, meaning water. *Dijjinā*, the name of a place, has a Boḍo origin, which may be derived from *dija* (o) meaning to melt; *jini* (dirt). *Heṅsivā* (grant of Balavarman) has a Boḍo origin, derived from formations like *haing* (relation); *scbai* (break). *Kalaṅgā* (Ratnapāla grant) is derived from the Austric, *kloṅg* (noise). *Hāpyoma* (Indrapāla grant) is derived from the Boḍo, *hap* (penetrate); *yao* (hand); *Mandi* (Indrapāla grant) is dervied from the Boḍo, *mandu* (a hut in cultivated land); *digḍola* (Dharmapāla grant) is derived from the Austric, *dik* (house); *dol* (place); *Hājo* is derived from the Boḍo word meaning a hill. Dihoṅg, Diboṅg and such other river names indicate both an Austric and Boḍo origin, *hoṅg* or *oṅg* in Austric standing for water and *di* or *ti* in Boḍo standing for the same.[26] A number of such survivals

26. B. K. Kakati, *N.I.A.*, VI, pp. 49-51; *Ibid*, IV, pp. 388-94; *Assamese—Its Formation and Development*, pp. 54-56.

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may be cited to prove the composite character of the Assamese culture.

The tribes, chiefly of Austro-Asiatic and Tibeto-Burman origin, whether or not Hinduised, have really contributed to the various aspects of the composite Assamese culture. The very foundation of the social system, marriage laws, etc., of the Aryans and Aryanised Hindus of the the valley, is more or less based on earlier elements, who evolved their own laws of exogamy, totemism and other features. In the field of economic life and cottage industries, evidence of the contribution made particularly by the Boḍo elements is not wanting. In the evolution of the various religious cults, fetishism, animism, cults of fertility and phallus, etc., the non-Aryan tribes have perhaps laid the foundation of Śaktism and Tāntrikism in Assam, which, mixing with the Alpine-Aryan system, has been much Hinduised, though in their fundamental ideas the whole system is based upon magic and other crude rites. The harvesting ceremonies of the Assamese, though they have Aryan or Hindu affinities, must have been greatly influenced by the tribes. The same influences can be detected in art and architecture and other aspects of Assamese culture. It is due to the admixture of these elements and the mutual influence of one upon the other that Assamese culture, though fundamentally allied to that of India, has retained its separate entity with local variations. An examination of its various aspects will explain the nature of that composite culture and will also help us in determining its place and its bearing upon a larger whole of a different people.

3. Social divisions—Varṇāśrama :

The two fundamental principles on which the social life of the ancient Indians were based are the *varṇāśrama dharma*, and Assamese life also was not an exception. We need not go into the origin of *varṇa*. Suffice it to hold that both the non-Aryans and Aryans contributed to the development of the castes and classes in India and ideas like totemism and exogamy lay at the root of the caste system as a whole.[27] A number of factors such as heredity, marriage relations, economic pursuits, religion, geography, etc., contributed to the growth of a vast number of groups

27. Hutton, *C.R.I.*, 1931, I, I, pp. 433f; Risley, *Asiatic Quarterly* (No. 3), p. 537; A. Lang, *Myth, Ritual and Religion*, I, pp. 79f; B.N. Datta, *Man in India*, XIII, pp. 97-114; S. C. Roy, *Man in India*, XIV, pp. 74f, 99, 253; XVIII, pp. 85-105; Risley, *People of India*, pp. 263f; Gait, *C.R.I.*, 1911, I, I, pp. 365-95; *E.R.E.*, III, pp. 230-39; Hutton, *Caste in India*, pp. 163f; Ghurye, *Caste & Class in India*, p. 155; *Caste & Race in India*, pp. 142f; R.W. Frazer, *Literary History of India*, p. 25; Macdonell & Keith, *Vedic Index*, II, p. 81.

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and sub-groups in course of time.[28] The fundamental contributory factor was the attitude of superiority assumed particularly by the higher classes. It is doubtful indeed whether the word *varṇa*, meaning colour, had in the beginning any relation with the caste (*jāti*) of the later period; but subsequently the two have been closely associated and even identified. Whatever the origin, the caste system has never been marked by extreme rigidity in any period of its development in respect of restrictions of food, professions and even marriage relations, and that is why a number of sub-castes obtaining due recognition within the fold of orthodox Hinduism grew up in course of time.[29]

We need not dilate upon the merits or otherwise of the class or caste system in general; but, as we shall show from our local epigraphs and other sources, the original four *varṇas*, *Brāhmaṇa*, *Kṣatriya*, *Vaiśya* and *Śūdra* did not remain in their traditional position and even the Brāhmaṇas contracted marriages with the lower classes. There was a common bond between groups, all contributing to the welfare of all, because of their occupation of the same locality in a village, and interdependence in all matters has been the guiding principle of the system.[30] Hindu society in fact was based on the principle of *svadharma*, which was both spiritual and functional and it was conceived as an organism, the divisions being based primarily on the respective *guṇa* of each. This is shown by the traditional account of the four original *varṇas*, originating from the same Brahma.[31] The respective duties and functions of the *varṇāśrama* are explained in the *Kālikā Purāṇa* and other texts.[32]

Brāhmaṇas : Epigraphy proves that Assamese Hindu society in general was based upon the same *varṇāśrama dharma*; but both, as described in the texts, give us an impression of an ideal state of society based upon divine social order; the rulers are said to have been created for upholding that order. Bhagadatta was the leader of all these divisions: (*varṇāśramānāṁ gururekavīraḥ*).[33] Bhāskara was created for the proper organisation of their divisions, which had become mixed up; (*avakīrṇavarṇāśrama-dharma-pravibhāgāya nirmito*).[34] Vanamāla gratified the appetite of the

28. See R.P. Chanda, *Indo-Aryan Races*, p. 36; G.S. Ghurye, *Caste & Race in India*, pp. 2f; Risley, *Tribes & Castes of Bengal*, I, XVf.
29. See *Manu*, X, 8f.
30. See Ghurye, *Caste and Race in India*, pp. 2-25.
31. *Puruṣa Sūkta*, X, 90.
32. See *Śānti Parvan*, LIX; *Yoginī Tantra*, 1/6; II/9.
33. Nowgong grant, V 7.; similar line occurs in the *Raghuvaṁśa*: 5/19.
34. Nidhanpur grant, lines 34-35.

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people of all classes and stages of life.[35] During the reign of Indrapāla, the laws of the four classes and stages were observed in their proper order.[36] How and when the caste system was introduced into Assam is uncertain, but it was certainly introduced by the Aryans, though its foundation may have been laid by the non-Aryan. On the basis of both epigraphy and literature, we have discussed elsewhere the introduction of the Brāhmaṇical, more appropriately the *Āryya* culture, in the land, and have also pointed out that, beginning at least with the 6th century A.D., it was the systematic policy of the rulers to create *agrahāras* for the Brāhmaṇas, and other high class Aryans.

As appears from the epigraphs, the *Brāhmaṇa* society was based on their *vedaśākhās*, *gotras* and *pravaras*, which determined their exogamic marriage relations. The *vedaśākhās* included various divisions or sections of the Vedas to which different sections of the Brāhmaṇas belonged. The *gotras* are associated originally with seven or eight *ṛṣis* and there were, therefore, seven or eight *gotras*, which in course of time increased to hundreds; closely connected with the *gotra* is the *pravara*, i.e., the invocation of *Agni* in the name of the *ṛṣi* ancestors of a *Brāhmaṇa*, as he consecrated the sacrificial fire. The *pravaras* in fact are associated with the priests or sages whose names constituted the *pravara* of that *gotra*.[37] The Nidhanpur grant mentions a number of Brāhmaṇa donees with their *vedaśākhās*, *pravaras* and *gotras*.[38] The Tezpur grant (v. 30) mentions one Brāhmaṇa of the *Śāṇḍilya gotra* of the Yajur Veda. The Nowgong grant (v. 26) mentions the *Kāṇvaśākhā* of the *Kāpila gotra*. The Bargāon grant (v. 16) mentions the same *śākhā* of the *Parāśara gotra* and the Śuālkuchi grant (v. 16) refers to the *Kāṇvaśākhā* of the *Bhāradvāja gotra*. The grants of Indrapāla mention Brāhmaṇas of the *Kāśyapa gotra*,[39] and the grants of Dharmapāla refer to the *Kauthuma śākhā*,[40] *Śuddha Maudgalya*,[41] *Kārṣṇāyasa gotra*,[42] and *Āṅgirasa pravara*.[43]

35. Tezpur grant, V 30 , Parbatīyā plates, L. 32: *praprīta-samasta-varṇāśramād.*
36. Gauhāti grant, V 18: *samyagvibhakta-caturāśramavarṇadharmā.*
37. *E.R.E.*, VI, pp. 353f.
38. Some of the gotras from inscriptions are: *Kautsa, Gaurātreya, Vātsya, Vārhaspatya, Śākaṭāyana, Vārāha, Kāśyapa, Vaiṣṇavṛddhi, Kauśika, Śaunaka, Āśvalāyana, Śālaṅkāyaṅa, Gārgya, Ālambāyana, Āṅgirasa, Pāṅkalya, Gautama, Kauṭilya, Kṛṣṇātreya, Kavestara, Māṇḍavya, Bhāradvāja, Kauṇḍīnya, Vāśiṣṭha, Agniveśya, Sānkṛtyāyana, Yāska, Pārāśarya, Bhārggava, Kātyāyana, Jātūkarṇa, Maudgalya, Pautrimāṣyá, Śāṇḍilya, Paurṇa, Sāvarṇika*, etc. Some of the donees of the Nidhanpur grant were not evidently Brāhmaṇas.
39. Gauhāti grant, V 20; Guākuchi grant, V 21.
40. Śubhaṅkarapāṭaka grant, V 17.
41. Puṣpabhadrā grant, V 12.
42. *J.A.R.S.*, VIII, p. 118.
43. Puṣpabhadrā grant, V 12.

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Inscriptions also indicate that at least some of the Brāhmaṇas observed the orthodox rules and duties relating to *yajana*, *yājana*, *adhyayana*, *adhyāpanā*, *dāna*, and *pratigraha*. They also followed other injunctions relating to *snāna*, *japa*, *sandhyā* and other sacrifices.[44] It appears, therefore, that Brāhmaṇical culture made good progress in ancient Assam and the Brāhamaṇas held a position of honour in the royal court and served the State in the capacity of high officials. They were not only entrusted with the duty of the diffusion of learning but also that they took to other professions.

On a study of the surnames of some of the Brāhmaṇa donees of the Nidhanpur grant we have shown elsewhere the possibility of their intermixture with the Alpines and their close association with the Nāgar-Brāhmaṇas and the Kāyasthas.[45] In fact, most of the Brāhmaṇas of Bengal and Assam must have assimilated Alpine blood at an early period. As the Nidhanpur grant reveals, some of the interesting surnames, not probably found elsewhere in India except Assam and Bengal, are *datta ghoṣa*, *kara*, *kuṇḍa*, *mitra*, *deva*, *bhaṭṭa*, *sena*, *nandī*, *nāgara*, *soma*, etc. The grant also disproves the theory that the ancestors of the Brāhmaṇa and Kāyastha families of Assam migrated to this land from places like Kanauj and Mithilā. It is worth mentioning that in modern Assam none of these surnames is found among the Assamese Brāhmaṇas, as they are in Bengal. In any case, due to intermixture with the Alpine priests, the Brāhmaṇas of Assam did not perhaps take to strictly orthodox habits. We have discussed elsewhere the question of the Brāhmaṇas of Assam taking to other economic pursuits. In spite of their pride in social superiority, therefore, they were liberal in their outlook regarding occupations and in their observance of other social laws. In fact, the Brāhmaṇas of Assam have always followed a rather flexible system, not as strictly rigid as in other parts of India, even in respect of food.

Other Classes. Epigraphs, beginning with the 6th century A.D., mention *Kāyasthas*, *Karaṇas*, *Lekhakas*, *Daivajñas* (*gaṇakas*) and others; but most of them, if not all, were officers and professional classes rather than castes. The origin of *Kāyasthas* is doubtful. There are at least two theories of their origin: *Śūdra* and *Kṣatriya*. R. P. Chanda takes them to be of mixed *Karaṇa* caste.[46] According to the *Brahmavaivarta*

44. Bargāon grant; Nowgong grant, V 32; Śubhaṅkarapāṭaka grant, V 11. The rulers are said to have made gifts of land after taking *snāna* acording to prescribed rules.
45. See Bhandarkar, *I. A.*, LXI, p. 48; J.C. Ghosh, *I.H.Q.*, VI, pp. 60f.
46. *Indo-Aryan Races*, pp. 192f.

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Purāṇa[47] and the *Bṛhaddharma Purāṇa*, the *Karaṇas* occupied the place of the *Kāyasthas*.[48] In the *Sūtras*, the *Smṛtis* and the *Mahābhārata*, *Karaṇa* is used in the sense of a caste.[49] *Kāyastha* is mentioned as an administrative officer in the *Viṣṇu* and *Yājñavalkya Smṛtis*, and in the former, he is taken as a keeper of public accounts.[50] The later *Smṛtis* like *Uśanas* and *Vedavyāsa* mention *Kāyastha* as a caste and the latter includes it among the *Śūdras*.[51]

In the Nidhanpur grant, the *Karaṇa* or the *Nyāya-Karaṇika*, Janārdanasvāmī, was a Brāhmaṇa, and the *Kāyastha* was Dundhunātha; both the terms *Karaṇika* and *Kāyastha* are used here in the sense of officers and scribes.[52] So the local epigraphs do not definitely establish that Kāyastha was used in the sense of a caste. If B. K. Kākati's derivation of the word from the Austric formation like *katho* (to write); *kaiathoh* (to keep accounts),[53] is accepted, *Kāyastha* is to be associated originally with the writer. It may be noted that a type of Assamese script, *Kāitheli* developed in Assam from early times. This shows their intimate connection with the functions of a scribe. Some contemporary epigraphs, however, use the word in the sense of a caste name.[54] But we do not know when *Kāyastha* began to be used in Assam as a caste name. We have suggested elsewhere the possibility of the *Kāyasthas* having assimilated Alpine blood, and have also pointed out that they were allied to the Nāgar Brāhmaṇas. Therefore, anything like a pure Brāhmaṇa or Kṣatriya[55] origin of the Kāyasthas is very doubtful. We have also tried to show that among some of the donees of the Nidhanpur grant there were Kāyasthas and Nāgar Brāhmaṇas with surnames *datta*, *soma*, *nandi*, etc. If our inference is correct, the Kāyasthas might have made their way into Assam at an early period, and some of the Kāyastha families of Bengal are the descendants of those from Kāmarūpa. In Assam they are now given a position next to the Brāhmaṇas, and constitute the main priestly class of our society, unlike those of other parts of India.

47. See Wilson, *Indian Caste*, I, pp. 439-41.
48. Chanda, *Indo-Aryan Races*, pp. 192f.
49. P.V. Kane, *History of Dharmaśāstra*, II, I, p. 74.
50. *Viṣṇudharmasūtra*, VII, 3.
51. *History of Dharmaśāstra*, II, I, p. 76.
52. *K.S.*, p. 43 (f.n.).
53. *App. to B. K. Barua's Cultural History of Assam*, I, pp. 202f.
54. See *E.I.*, XVIII p. 251; XII pp. 61f; *P.A.S.B.*, 1880, p. 78.
55. N.N. Vasu, *Social History of Kāmarūpa*, III, p. 167.

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Another class of people, allied to the *Karaṇas* and the *Kāyasthas*, used in the sense of a writer, are the Lekhakas. Sumantu, quoted in the *Parāśara Mādhavīya*, takes *Lekhaka* as a low caste, like an oilman, from whom food cannot be taken by a Brāhmaṇa,[56] and in that sense *Lekhaka* also stood for a caste; but our local epigraphs refer to him as a writer. Bṛhaspati, quoted in *Smṛti Candrikā*, refers to *Gaṇaka* and *Lekhaka* as two persons who were connected with the work of a judge, and states that they were twice-born.[57] In any case, it is reasonable to hold that the *Lekhakas* were a class of writers rather than a particular caste, and it is in that sense that the word is used in the local epigraphs. The *Daivajñas*,[58] or astrologers had a place of honour in Assamese society. They subsequently came to be known as *Gaṇakas*. The *Bṛhaddharma Purāṇa* states that *Gaṇaka* was born of a *Śākadvīpi* father and a *Vaiśya* mother.[59] The composition of a number of manuscripts in Assam, dealing with the solar cult and planetary worship, may be attributed to them. It is likely that, like the Kāyasthas and the Nāgar Brāhmaṇas, they had also an admixture of Alpine blood, and like the Magians of Irān contributed to the astronomical belief in Assam, justifying the name of Prāgjyotiṣa.[60] Even today they are given a position just below the Brāhmaṇas.

The word '*Vaidya*' occurs in the Śubhaṅkarapāṭaka grant which was composed by a Vaidya, named Prasthānakalasa: *Prasthānakalasa-nāmnā- vaidyena racita praśasti* (*V* 15). In Bengal the *Vaidya* is taken to be a Kāyastha, next in rank to the Brāhmaṇas. It is doubtful whether the word was used as a caste name in the said epigraph. In fact, *Vaidyas* are not found now in Assam as a caste; we do not know whether they came to be know as *ojāhs* (physicians) and whether the latter may be associated with the *Vaidyas* at all. The *ojāhs* of Assam, as we find to-day, may be of any caste. Inscriptions of other regions, however, prove the existence and important position of the *Vaidyas* as early as the 8th century A. D., particularly in Southern India.[61] The *Bhiṣaja* again as a class of physicians is mentioned in local grant.[62] According to *Uśanas*, he was the offspring of a Brāhmaṇa father through a Kṣatriya wife. He

56. II, I, p. 383.
57. *History of Dharmaśāstra*, II, p. 76.
58. Kamauli grant of Vaidyadeva, V 8.
59. *Uttarā Kāṇḍa*, XIII, 52.
60. Spooner, *J.R.A.S.*, 1915, II, 433f.
61. See *E.I.*, VII, pp. 317-321; *Ibid*, XVIII, pp. 291-309; *I.A.*, 1839, pp. 57f.
62. Nowgong grant of Balavarman, V 21.

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is also known as *Vaidyaka*. The *Brahma Purāṇa*, quoted by Aparārka, states that the *Bhiṣak* lived by surgery and attended upon patients. It is unlikely that the *Bhiṣaja* of our epigraphs designated a particular caste; the term might have been applied to various *varṇas* and stood only for a professional class.

We have already stated that modern Hindu society may be broadly divided into two classes—*Brāhmaṇas* and *Śūdras*. While evidence of the existence of *Vaiśyas* is not lacking, true Aryan Kṣatriyas are perhaps not found in Assam, and our knowledge about them in the past is insufficient to come to any definite conclusion. Some writers take all classes, including the Kalitās as *Śūdras*. But this view is wrong. The origin of the word *Śūdra* is uncertain and most writers give it an aboriginal or non-Aryan origin ; but it is certain that the *Śūdra* class was composed of various elements.[63] Whatever their origin, the *Śūdras* were also included among the four *varṇas* of Hindu society and *Āryya* was taken in the sense of a free man and comprised all the four *varṇas*.[64] In the modern sense, the *Śūdra* is taken to include all those classes, who have adopted the Hindu system, except the higher classes.

About the origin of Kalitās of Assam, who are now included among the *Śūdras*, we have discussed this question in another connection, and have tried to show that they were not pure Aryan Kṣatriyas. We believe that their existence in Assam may be traced back as early as the fifth century B. C., if not earlier, and that they were the remnants of the Alpine priests in Eastern India and Assam who, mixing with the Aryans, were designated as Kṣatriyas. It is reasonable to hold that there were Kalitās in Assam even before the caste or *varṇa* system was introduced into the land, and the term, therefore, denotes an ethnic type rather than a caste name. The Kalitās are still given a position next to the twice born classes, and their social relations, marriage rules etc., conform to the orthodox Hindu rules. The foundation of Assamese culture was mainly laid by them, and, like the Brāhmaṇas, they still retain their individual identity.

Details regarding other *Śūdra* castes and classes are lacking. Inscriptions mention a class of people called the *Kaivartas* or fishermen who

63. See Beams, *The Races of North-Western Provinces*, I, p. 167; Risley, *Tribes & Castes*, II, pp. 268f.
64. Chanda, *Indo-Aryan Races*, pp. 5, 245; Mac. and Keith, *Vedic Index*, II, p. 388.

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also helped the State by collecting tolls.[65] As found in the Tezpur Rock inscription of Harjjaravarman, the expression is *kaivarta-nau(ku) kṣi-svabhakṣa-sādhanī*, which literally means "the eater of the property in the interior of boats". They are often associated with water and boats. In the *Smṛtis*, the *Kaivartas* are taken to be of mixed caste, and Manu uses the term to mean the offspring of a *Niṣāda* father by a *Āyagava* mother.[66] The *Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa* (X, 34) states that a Kaivarta was born of a Kṣatriya father and a Vaiśya mother. Whatever their origin, it is certain that the Kaivartas were non-Aryans, and their economic pursuit consisted mainly of fishing. Epigraphy also indicates that some Kaivartas took to agriculture. In Assam they are now divided into two sections: *Halovā* (those who work with ploughs) and *Jālovā* (those who are actually fishermen).[67] It appears certain that they were depressed classes, who having adopted Hinduism, followed the general rules of Hindu society and were, therefore, included within the *Śūdras*.

Inscriptions mention the *Kumbhakāras*,[68] and the *Tantuvāyas*.[69] The origin of the *Kumbhakāras* is uncertain. Uśanas takes *Kumbhakāra* as the offspring of a Brāhmaṇa by a Vaiśya woman. Vaikhānasa adds that such an offspring becomes either a *Kumbhakāra* or a barber. Vedavyāsa and Devala take them as *Śūdras*.[70] In modern Assam, the potters are known as both *Kumāras* and *Hiḍās*; but in their origin, the *Hiḍās* appear to be more degraded than the *Kumāras* and were allied to the Kaivartas. They gave up their original profession of fisherman and took to the making of pottery. No intercourse has been allowed between the *Kumāras* and the *Hiḍās*,[71] The Puṣpabhadrā grant refers to a degraded people and mentions *Dijja-Ratihāḍī* in connection with boundary of the land granted.[72] Perhaps the *Hāḍīs* were more or less allied to the *Hiḍās*, though not to the fishermen. As they have taken to various professions in course of time, such as trade, agriculture, working in metal like gold, etc., sub-classes came into being;[73] but at present no inter-caste marriage

65. *J.B.O.R.S.*, 1917, pp. 508f: Line 4; *K.S.*, p. 188 for variant explanation *Kaivartas* are also mentioned in the Gauhāti grant of Indrapāla (line 47) and in the Puṣpabhadrā grant of Dharmapāla (line 51), associated intimately with pond and water.
66. *Manu*, X, 4.
67. *A.C.R.*, 1901, I, p. 132. The classification here is wrong.
68. Nidhanpur grant, Last Plate; *E.I.*, II, pp. 347f (Kamauli grant).
69. Śubhaṅkarapāṭaka grant, Lines 49, 54-55; the expression here is *tantrāṇāṁ*.
70. *History of Dharmaśāstra*, II, I, p. 78.
71. *A.C.R.*, 1891, I, p. 272.
72. *K.S.*, p. 181 (f.n. 3); Puṣpabhadrā grant (Line 50).
73. *A.C.R.*, 1891, I, pp. 277-78.

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takes place between these various sub-groups. Patañjali takes the *Tantuvāyas* as Śūdras, and therefore they were excluded from all religious rites.[74] It is doubtful whether the *Tantuvāyas* of the epigraphs denoted a caste. Now in Assam the term *Tātī*, the modern equivalent of *Tantuvāya*, stands for a professional class.

It is seen that it was on the basis of various occupations that a large number of sub-groups were formed, which later on developed into various castes. Towards the end of our period and at a subsequent time we find that some of the non-Aryan tribes also were included within the Hindu fold. The most important of these were the Rābhās, Kachāris, Meches Koches and the like. The Hindu priests have been responsible for making them *śaraṇīya* (i.e. they have been accepted as Śūdras) according to Hindu rites, and all of them were included within one class (Śūdras). This process has been going on for a long time past, with the result that there has been an increase in the members of the Hindu fold. All social and marriage relations of the converted tribes have more or less been based upon the injunctions laid down in the orthodox Hindu texts.[75] This conversion was possible because of the liberal outlook of the Hindu system, and in fact, the Assamese Hindu social divisions have been more or less bassed upon a spirit of liberalism, and probably no caste or class, including that of the Brāhmaṇas followed their caste rules in strict accordance with the *śāstras*. The higher classes did not look down upon the degraded ones, as they did in other parts of India, and were not so strict in the observance of their rules relating to food and profession.[76] The comparative laxity of class distinction in Assam's social system was primarily due to the Vaiṣṇava reformation, and partly because of the intermixture of peoples, during the Āhom rule. The *Yoginī Tantra* illustrates this.[76a] The moral tone of this Tantra is, however, very low.

The four *āśramas*, *Brahmacaryya*, *Gṛhastha*, *Vānaprastha* and *Yati* stand for the four stages in a man's career. Manu describes how these were graded according to the age and status of an individual.[77] The system was based on a life of discipline, and the acquirement of experience

74. *History of Dharmaśāstra*, p. 63.
75. Gait, *History of Assam*, pp. 8f, 47.
76. See Robinson, *Descriptive Account of Assam*, p. 264; *A.C.R.*, 1881, p. 66; *Ibid* 1901, IV, I, pp. 116f; K.L. Barua, *Man in India*, XXII, pp. 76-78.
76a. II/9:*Kāmarūpe na sānyāsastathā dīrghavrataṁ priye |*
Na tyajet sāmīṣaṁ devī brahmacaryyamataṁ na ca ||
Hīnācārstu saumāre sarvāśi sarvavikrayī |
Tatra nārī sadā tuṣṭā tatra rājā supuṇyavān ||
77. *Manu*, IV, I; V, 169; VI, 1-2, 33.

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and knowledge. But it was more an ideal than an actual practice. Like the *varṇa* system, the *āśramas* were also flexible, and all evidence seems to show that the system was never accepted literally by more than a comparatively handful of people in any part of ancient India at any time. It appears to be a typical Brāhmaṇical attempt at includ ng social phenomena of spontaneous growth in an artificially orderly system. As the very conception of *varṇa* underwent gradual changes along with the social progress and with a new outlook on the changing conditions, so also, ideas of the *āśramas* became liberalised. Even the lawgivers like Gautama[78] and Baudhāyana[79] hold that, of the *āśramas*, that of the householder is the most important, and some works even go to the length of prescribing that other stages are not essential in the *Kali* age.[80]

On the basis of the local epigraphs, we have already referred to the *āśramas*, mentioned along with the *varṇas*. The rulers, we are told, were responsible for the upholding of this divine social order and stages of life[81]. We have, however, no details about the working of the system, nor do we know whether the four stages were strictly followed at any time by any individual. A few instances of the abdication of rulers on different occasions do not give us strong ground for believing that they did so in order to live a life of renunciation, or that they entered into the life of a *vānaprastha* or a *sanyāsī*. It is unlikely that even the orthodox Brāhmaṇas followed the rules of the four stages, and the existing evidence proves that they entered the life of a *gṛhastha* and remained as such throughout their lives. Inscriptions refer only to their periods of *Brahmacaryya* and *gṛhastha*.[82] It may be mentioned in passing that even the great Vaiṣṇava reformer Śaṅkaradeva, who dedicated his life to the preaching of his tanets, remained a *gṛhastha*, and advised his followers not to follow strictly all the injunctions of an orthodox Vaiṣṇava. The career of his disciple, Mādhavadeva, was, however, an exception, as he remained a celibate throughout his life. In fine, like the *varṇa* system, the four stages of life in ancient Assam were perhaps accepted in a spirit of liberalism.

4. Family and inheritance—houses and house-hold articles :

Our knowledge about the family and the nature of inheritance is meagre. Hindu life in general has been based upon the joint family system.

78. III, I, 35.
79. II, 6, 29.
80. Kane, *History of Dharmaśāstra*, II, I, p. 424.
81. Nowgong grant, V 7; Nidhanpur grant, Lines 34f; Gauhāti grant, V 18.
82. Nowgong grant, V 28, 31.; Puṣpabhadrā grant, *V* 15.

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Theoretically at least the joint family included the *sapiṇḍa* relations (direct blood relationship) and this theory of *sapiṇḍa* had twofold implications according to the *Mitākṣarā* and the *Dāyabhāga*, bearing upon inheritance and the like.[83] We do not know whether ancient Assam followed the *Mitākṣarā* and *Dāyabhāga* rules. In Bengal the latter system was followed,[84] and it is likely that ancient Assam also adopted it, since it is followed here to-day.[84a] Some of the important features of the *Dāyabhāga* were that sons had no interest in ancestral property by birth and they could claim partition only after their father's death, or partition could only take place between father and sons if the former so desired; a widow could succeed to her husband's interest on his death even if he had a joint interest with his brothers, and the right to take a deceased person's estate was regulated by the spiritual benefit conferred by the person claiming to be heir, (by means of offering of *piṇḍas*) and not by the principle of consanguinity, as in the *Mitākṣarā*. According to this procedure, therefore, the family system was based upon patriarchy, the father being the head of the family, possessing sole authority over his property. Though the law of primogeniture was not recognised, the eldest son was often given a greater share, as the burden of maintaining his parents in their old age fell upon him; otherwise all the sons got equal share. Āpastambha for instance, pleads for equal division and quotes Manu to that effect. Preferential divisions were, however, not unknown.[85] There are cases in which the father bequeathed his own earned property to whomever he desired.

Evidence of the joint ownership of landed property is furnished by the Nidhanpur grant by which land was given to several brothers jointly. The division of the joint property among brothers is also indicated.[86] A good evidence of the joint family system is found in the Parbatīyā plates of Vanamāladeva, under which the four brothers Cūḍāmaṇi, Dēṭōbhā, Garga and Śambhū lived together. It is said that they were living together out of fear of the loss of their *dharma*.[87] Though the grant was made to the eldest brother, it was meant to be enjoyed by them all, and it appears that there is an indication here of the acknowledgment of the right of the sons to demand partition of the family property, as provided under the *Mitākṣarā* system. The Hindu family tie, however, in some cases at

83. Kane, *History of Dharmaśāstra*, I, pp. 150, 290
84. *Ibid*, p. 322.
84a. The *Dāyabhāga-Kaumudī* of Pītāmbara Siddhānta-vāgīśa is an evidence in point.
85. II, 14; *Gautama*, XXIII.
86. Śubhaṅkarapāṭaka grant, V 22.
87. Parbatīyā plates of Vanamāladeva (*E.I.*, XXIX, pp. 145f).

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least, broke upon the sons getting themselves married, when they demanded a share of their property and wanted to live independently.

In regard to adoption, we have no good evidence, but it may be held that the same practices were followed in Assam as in other parts of India. The tribal family system has been based upon quite different principles, and their society shows traces of a matriarchal system, and in some cases indicates a transition from matriarchy to patriarchy.[88]

We have on information about the design of the dwelling houses of our period; but the nature of the Assamese, like all ancient peoples, is so conservative that it may be suggested that little improvement has been made in this respect, and their houses remained for centuries almost the same, with little difference from the present-day conditions of the majority of the inhabitants. Normally the members of the same family may have lived under the same roof, and with the increase of members, new houses were required to be raised. The family houses generally consisted of one dwelling quarters with as many rooms as essential, often with a kitchen attached; one small house or rather a shelter for the cattle; one store-house for paddy and other articles, and, for those who could afford it, a guest house and a small one for daily worship. With the separation of the family, new houses had to be constructed.

The building materials probably consisted mainly of wood, bamboo, thatch, reeds and ropes. The material for plastering the walls was perhaps cowdung mixed with clay and sand. The houses were built upon the ground, but the practice of raising houses on piles, particularly for cattle and storing of foodstuffs, may have been known.[88a] It is even today practised, particularly in the villages and paddy fields. In fact, the practice of the erection of pile dwellings has been an extensive one among almost all the tribes,[89] and it is likely that the people of the plains may have got the idea from them. Beds and seats may ordinarily have been made of wood, but beds of bamboo may also have been known.

88. See Gurdon, *Khasis*, pp. 76f; Hutton, *Sema Nagas*, pp. 130f; *Angami Nagas*, *App*. V, 398f; K.M. Kapadia, *The Matrilineal Social Organisation among the Nagas of Assam*, pp. 3f; Playfair, *Garos*, pp. 71f; Hodson, *India-Census Ethnography*, pp. 40f; Gait, *C.R.I.*, 1911, I, I, pp. 237f.

88a. The extant ruins of temples and buildings show that building materials consisted chiefly of stone and bricks, and while the royal palatial buildings were raised over hillocks and on plain ground, the temples were constructed invariably on hill-tops.

89. Peal, *Notes on Platform dwellings in Assam*, *J.R.A.I.*, XI, pp. 53f.

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We have discussed in the following pages the working in metal, wood, cane, bamboo and other materials. House-hold utensils, cooking vessels etc. were made of metal, wood, bamboo, clay, etc. Even now both metal and clay pots, bowls and other vessels are used both for drinking and cooking; bamboo pipes were also used for keeping articles like oil and salt, as they are used even now by the Assamese villagers. We have a number of earthenwares of the period. Bāṇa mentions among the presents from Bhāskara wooden boxes, drinking vessels, earthen pots, cups, cane stools, baskets and thick bamboo tubes,[90] indicating that these were used as house-hold utensils. The common people probably had no furniture except cane mats and other articles made of bamboo. In fact, our knowledge of the furniture of the period is insufficient. The nature and the use of the house-hold utensils and other articles, like the construction of dwelling quarters, naturally depended upon the position of the individuals concerned.

5. Marriage—married life and position of women :

The Hindu social structure and its solidarity was based to a great extent on the institution of marriage, having social and religious sanction. Manu recognises as many as eight kinds of marriage;[91] the recognition was certainly due to the mixture of the Aryan and non-Aryan elements. These marriages are : *Brahma* (based upon Vedic rites); *Daiva* (by which a girl is offered to a priest); *Ārṣa* (marriage by purchase in which the bride's father normally receives from the bridegroom a pair of oxen); *Kāya* or *Prājāpatya* (in which the marriage takes place after the proposal being made by the would-be bridegroom); *Āsura* (marriage by purchase); *Gāndharva* (secret union); *Rākṣasa* (marriage by force or capture) and *Paiśāca* (secret elopement).[92]

The law books enjoin upon the Brāhmaṇas to follow *Brahma*, *Daiva*, *Ārṣa* and *Prājāpatya*, while the Kṣatriyas could follow *Rākṣasa*, *Paiśāca* and *Gāndharva* types, and the *Āsura* form is valid for the Vaiśyas. The evidence from Assam is too meagre to arrive at any definite conclusion. It is unlikely that the rules of the texts were strictly followed in any part of ancient India.[92a] The traditional secret marriage of Aniruddha with

90. *H.C.* (Cowell), pp. 212f.
91. III, 21-34.
92. See L.D. Barnett, *Antiquities of India*, pp. 115f.
92a. The Kāmarūpa school of *Smṛti* founded by the *smṛtikāras* like Dāmodara Miśra of the early 14th century A.D. is found to have laid down rules quite in keeping with the Indian system, on the marriage, of particularly the upper classes.

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Uṣā suggests a marriage of the *gāndharva* or even *paiśāca* kind. The marriage of *Kṛṣṇa* with *Rukmiṇī*, described in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* (v, xxvi; *Rukmiṇī-Haraṇa*) is an instance of the union of the *rākṣasa* type. Another kind of marriage, called *svayamvara* is mentioned in the *Rājataraṅgiṇī* in connection with the marriage of Amṛtaprabhā to Meghavāhana of Kāśmīra.[93] No survival of this is found in Assam, except perhaps the type of informal union courted during the '*Bihu*' festival, which is now of rare occurrence.

Normally among the higher classes, the institution of marriage has been based on formal rites according to the *Prājāpatya* type. The Puṣpabhadrā grant (v. 15) seems to throw some light on the marriage of what is known as *Pāṇigrahaṇa*.[94]

Child marriage, except among the Brāhmaṇas and Kāyasthas who practise it even to-day, was perhaps as rare among other classes as widow re-marriage among the former. Brāhmaṇa youths usually married after the completion of their period of education. It was often the duty of a king to bear the expenses of a poor Brāhmaṇa so that after his marriage he might be a *gṛhastha*. This is incidentally referred to in the Nowgong grant (v. 31). The Hindu system was based on the principle that no man or woman should remain unmarried and the *snātaka* was required to enter into matrimony soon after his *Brahmacaryya*.[95] The necessity of progeny and life-long companionship led the Hindus in general to marry. The Assamese Hindus of the plains, whether Brāhmaṇas or Śūdras, followed in general all the rites of marriages recognised in the texts.[96] The Brāhmaṇas even now practise three rites regarding a single marriage: one before puberty; the second after the girl attaining that condition; and the third when she bears a child. We have no details of the marriage ceremonies of the ancient Assamese in general; the modern ceremony usually lasts for three to four days, and the most remarkable feature of the system is the singing of marriage songs, which constitute an important element of Assamese folk poetry. The whole ceremony has a socio-religious sanction, and the sanctity attached to it perhaps made divorce an impossibility. In the marriage of widows no such ceremonies are performed.

93. Bk. II, 147-48.

94. See *Antiquities of India*, pp. 115-16, 143-44.

95. Altekar, *Education in Ancient India*, pp. 25f.

96. See Thomson, *Assam Valley*, pp. 61f. The *Smṛti* texts, including those of Assam enjoin upon the Brāhmaṇas to follow strictly the rules in respect of their marriage. They are advised to give their daughters in marriage before the attainment of puberty: (see *Smṛti-Jyotiṣasāra-saṁgraha*, pp. 67-68, ed. M.R. Sastri & P. C. Choudhury.) But, in practice this has been otherwise, or was not universally followed.

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Though endogamy has been the general rule, cases of inter-caste marriages, particularly among the lower classes have not been rare, and polygamy and widow re-marriage have been almost an universal practice. We have no instance of polyandry in ancient Assam except among some tribes. It has been an universal practice to take or demand a dowry from the bride's father. Instances of paying some sort of bride's price by the bridegroom's parents were also not rare, and this has a parallel in the marriage by purchase, found so commonly among the non-Aryan tribes in Assam. In fact, all the forms of marriage that we have described with reference to the Hindus, have parallels in those of the tribes.[97] Even the practice of marriage by service which has been in vogue among some tribes, can be best illustrated by the '*capanīā*' system of the Assamese in general, by which the bridegroom becomes a life-long member of the bride's family. The tribal exogamous marriages may have influenced the marriage of the same kind among the Brāhmaṇas outside their *gotras*, fundamentally based on some kind of totemism.[98] The only difference that marks the Aryan from the non-Aryan system is the practice of premarital laxity and freedom of choice of partners allowed by the latter to both the sexes, characterised by an ancient institution, called communal barracks or bachelors' quarters.[99] In short, Assam being predominantly a land of non-Aryan inhabitants, marriage laws and customs of the Hindu and Hinduised population, might have been greatly influenced by the former.

The practice of *satī* and concubinage was probably known. Bhāskaravarman's name is associated with concubines. *Kuṭṭanīmataṁ*, a work of the eighth century A.D. by Dāmodaragupta, states that the king's concubine became a *satī* after his death.[100] It is not improbable that the king, referred to in the said work, was from Assam. As far as we know, this king remained a celibate throughout his life. The prevalence of the system is known from the *Yoginī Tantra*, which enjoins upon Brāhmaṇa widows to burn themselves on the funeral pyres of their husbands; Vaiśya and Śūdra widows were also allowed to do it if they were moved by a deep sense of love for their husbands. It was prohibited for unchaste women and those having many children.[101] These practices and many

97. Hodson, *India—Census Ethnography*, pp. 42-45.

98. A. Lang, *Myth, Ritual & Religion*, I, pp. 79f.

99. Peal, '*On the Morung as possibly a Relic of Pre-Marriage communism*', *J.R.A.I.*, XXII, pp. 244-261; *The Communal Barracks of Primitive Races*, *J.A.S.B.*, 1892, Pt. II, pp. 246-69.

100. *Kuṭṭanīmataṁ* : (ed. T.M. Tripathi, VV 560-61, pp. 167f.); *Kāvyamālā*, III, p.77.

101. II, VV 302-308. *Yoginī Tantra's* conception of morality and chastity of women, as laid down under section I/6 is low, and at places revolting, and some of its recommended practices are unworthy of a civilised society; so are its religious systems and philosophy.

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others are evils of the Hindu married life in general. The tribal system depicts by contrast a commendable picture, to be imitated by their more civilised neighbours.

But, whether followed in practice or in principle, the Hindu conception of married life has made woman a co-partner in the spiritual and temporal affairs of her husband, the '*gṛhalakṣmī*' or '*sahadharmiṇī*'. Chastity and devotedness to her husband have been considered as two great ornaments of her character. Happy domestic life and the training of their children depended much upon women possessing good qualities and education. Evidence of the types of work done by women is lacking, and some records refer to fine qualities of head and heart of queens only. References to other women are few. The Bargāon grant (v. 18) states that Śyāmāyikā was devoted to her Brāhmaṇa husband, and, being endowed with virtues, shone like the full moon, pure in form, dispelling darkness. The Śuālkuchi grant (v. 18) records that Ccheppāyikā was charming, true in faith, whose beauty was her own ornament and who resembled Lakṣmī. Purandarapāla's wife, Durlabhā was like *Śacī* to *Indra*, *Śivā* to *Śambhū*, *Rati* to *Madana*, *Lakṣmī* to *Hari* and *Rohiṇī* to the moon god.[102] Yajñavatī, the mother of Mahendravarman resembled the sacrificial wood that produces fire.[103] Harjjara's mother Jīvadevī is compared with *Kuntī* and *Subhadrā*; she was also like the morning twilight, worshipped by many, and was the source of great spiritual fame.[104] Gopāla's wife Nayanā was a queen of wide renown,[105] and Ratnā, the wife of Harṣapāla and the Brāhmaṇa lady Pāukā were noted for their works of charity and piety, compared with *Pārvatī*.[106] Most of these descriptions are more or less conventional , and as we have stated, we find little indication of the general level of culture of the women of our period. It is likely that, besides their house-hold duties, some of them, particularly the queens, had some sort of education and taste for other allied arts. The fine arts of the period portray female figures as playing on musical instruments and dancing, and the same source gives an idea of feminine beauty, so graphically described in the *Kumāra-Haraṇa*, *Rukmiṇī-Haraṇa* and the *Yoginī Tantra*, in connection with what is called *Kumārīpūjā*.[107]

Both literature and inscriptions depict the public and private life of women in general whether in a town or a village, in a court or a temple.

102. Gauhāti grant, V 14.
103. Nidhanpur grant, V 12.
104. Hayunthāl grant, V 11; Tezpur grant, V 10; Parbatīyā plates.
105. Puṣpabhadrā grant, V 5.
106. Śubhaṅkarapāṭaka grant, V 11, 19.
107. *Yoginī Tantra*, Bk I, Chap. 13, 17; II/9

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Epigraphy supplies us with details about the character of town damsels. When and how the purdah system was introduced into the Assamese society is not known; the wearing of veils is now a common practice among Assamese married women. The Tezpur grant indicates that women even took their bath in the open.[108] The Bargāon grant seems to refer to town women and the existence of courtesans, and the grants of Vanamāla mention *devadāsīs* in Śiva temples. Many literary works, particularly the Tāntrik works make references to the institution of *devadāsīs* or temple dancers in the service of the main object of worship, particularly in *Śiva* temples. The institution of the *devadāsī* goes back to remote antiquity, and is associated with the Mediterranean world.[109] Historical references to the prevalence of the practice, particularly in Southern India, are found as early as the third century A.D.,[110] if not earlier. It might have existed in Assam a long time before, perhaps introduced by non-Aryan elements. The institution is nothing but a sacred prostitution in some form or other. In Assam, *devadāsīs* came to be known as *naṭīs* meaning generally temple dancers. As we have stated, an early reference to *devadāsīs*, is made by the Tezpur grant (v. 24) of Vanamāla who is said to have made a gift of women to the *Śiva* temple. The same grant (v 30) refers to *Veśyā*. The survival of the practice was found not only in a *Siva* temple in Doobi in Kāmarūpa but also in the Buddhist-Vaiṣṇava temple of Hājo. It appears probable that the institution developed in Assam under Tāntrik influence, as described, for instance, in the *Yoginī Tantra*. It is, however, strange that the virgins dedicated to a noble cause, living as it were the life of a Buddhist nun, could degenerate into prostitutes and were allowed to defile the temples of god. In its extreme development, the institution has a parallel in the pre-marital communal life of the bachelors' quarters of the Assam tribes.

6. Food and drink :

Inscriptions are silent regarding the Assamese dishes of our period, and literature gives only incidental references. Among the Assamese Hindus, unlike those of many parts of India, rice was the staple food, and all sections of the people including the Brāhmaṇas were accustomed to the taking of meat and fish with certain restrictions regarding the meat of a particular animal or fish. Climatic conditions and the nature of her inhabitants determined their diet. Dietary practice, like the *varṇāśrama* system in Assam, has been based on a spirit of liberalism, and this conti-

108. *J.A.S.B.*, IX, II, pp. 766f.
109. Hutton, *C.R.I.*, 1931, I, I, pp. 236f.
110. See Altekar, *The position of Women in Hindu Civilisation*, pp. 214f.

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nued even under Vaiṣṇava Reformation. Food restrictions were usually observed during a period of penance, uncleanliness due to the death of a person and on occasions like the *saṅkrānti* and *ekādaśī*. These have parallels in the restrictions observed by the non-Aryan tribes not only regarding food but also other aspects of their culture.[111] As given in the *Yoginī Tantra*, serpent-shaped and scaleless fishes were not taken by the upper classes: (*matsyāṁśca salkahīnāṁśca sarpākārāṁśca varjjayet.*)[112] The same work recommends the meat of ducks, pigeons, tortoise and even wild boars:(*haṁsaṁ pārāvataṁ bhakṣyaṁ kūrmaṁ varāhameva ca Kāmarūpe parityāgād durgatistasya sambhavet.*)[113] Meat of goats, deer, rhinoceros, etc., was also taken. A later source refers to the use of pork, which with the soft roots of the plantian tree, made a good preparation.[114] Available sources do not refer to the practice of beef eating among Hindus in Assam. Opinion is also divided on the killing of cows and eating of beef in ancient India, even by the Aryans.[115] It is not unlikely that the practice was probably common among the Aryans.[116] But the absence of any definite reference in Assam does not help us to come to a definite conclusion about the prevalence of the practice among the Assamese Hindus as well.

The favourite curry of the Assamese has been an alkaline preparation from plantain trees[117] and certain water herbs, used also as a substitute for salt, mixed with fish. Sour curry preparations were made from various fruits, all mixed with fish. One special preparation of the Assamese was, as now *pāyasa* (rice pudding), prepared with milk, rice and sugar. Many works like the *Kālikā Purāṇa* (70/16-18) refer to the varieties of food preparations of the Assamese; the *Yoginī Tantra* in particular mentions milk of cows, goats and various preparations of curd, ghee and other sweets from buffalo's milk.[118] The *Kālikā Purāṇa* (75/3) refers to various delicious preparations : *ājyamannaṁ pāyasañca dadhi-kśīraṁ tathā madhu.* The same work[119] and the *Kumāra-Haraṇa* (207-9) mention other favourite dishes, prepared with vegetables, fish, meat, pulses, etc., and refer to the use of spices, viz., *ārdraka* (ginger), *jīraka* (cumin), *pippalīyaka* (long pepper) *marīca* (pepper), *karpūra* (camphor), *sariṣā* (mustard), etc. The vegetables

111. T.C. Hodson, *J.R.A.I.*, XXXVI, pp. 92, 103.
112. II/5/275.
113. *Ibid.*, II/9.
114. *Kumāra-Haraṇa*, V 208.
115. cf. Wilson, *Eassays*, II, p. 353; Colebrooke, *A. Res.* VII, pp. 288-89.
116. See R.L. Mitra, *J.A.S.B.*, XLI, I, pp. 174-78; *J.A.S.B.*, XXXIX, p. 241.
117. Tavernier refers to the extraction of salt from this tree: (*Travels in India*, II, pp. 282-83);also *Yoginī Tantra*, II/9.
118. II/5, 9, V 257.
119. *Yoginī Tantra*, II/7, V 186.

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mentioned in the *Yoginī Tantra* (II, 7) are *mūlaka*, *rājaka*, *vāstuka* ,*pālaṅga*, *nālikā*, *śukna*, *lāphā*, *caṅgā*, *ḍhekīyā* (a kind of a fern), etc. The *K.P.* (70) mentions *māṣa*, *mudga*, *masūra*, *marīca*, *pippalī*, *jīraka* along with *annavyañjana*.

It should not be believed that these references have had a bearing on the livelihood of the common man; and with all these preparations, Assamese dishes remained perhaps simple. It is important to observe as well that the daily requirements of the average Assamese were supplied by home-made products, as almost every house-hold had its cattle, paddy fields and vegetable gardens and fruit trees.

Home-made liquors, rice-beer, or the '*lāopānī*' of the tribes, were used as drink. The evidence from ancient Assam is very little. Bāṇa states that Bhāskara sent to Harṣa "cups of ullaka, diffusing a fragrance of sweet wine".[120] *The Kālikā Purāṇa* (49/9;54/18;60/45-46;70/14) refers to *modaka*, *piṣṭaka* and *pāyasa* along with *madhu*. The '*mahdumada*' of the Bargāon grant (second plate) was perhaps a kind of preparation of honey. The *Yoginī Tantra* mentions wine in connection with the worship of *Kāmeśvarī*: (*rudhirairmāṁsa-madyaśca pūjayet Parameśvarīṁ*).[121] The use of wine was not perhaps common among all people. Another favourite habit of the Assamese was the chewing of betelvine and nut (*tāmbūla-pāṇa*), introduced perhaps by non-Aryans, particularly the Khāsis, who have a special liking for it. The abundance of areca-nut and betel vine in Assam is evidenced by both epigraphy and literature. The use of these articles particularly by women, is given in the *Yoginī Tantra*,[121a] which speaking of women in general states thus : *na śukradarśanaṁ strīṇāṁ tāmbūlāśā sadā bhavet*. In fact, the practice of chewing unripe betel nut with lime is nowhere found in India except in Assam. This is recorded by a later Muslim source. The *Fathiyah-i-Ibriyah* states that the people of Assam chewed *pāṇ* in abundance with unripe *supāri*, even unshelled.[122] The practice is now universal among the Assamese, and has a social and national importance.

7. Dresses—Ornaments and other articles of luxury :

The types of dress and ornaments used by the Assamese, both males and females, are to be gathered from literature, epigraphs and sculptured

120. *H.C.*, (Cowell) pp. 213f.
121. II/7, 19.
121a. *Yoginī Tantra*, I/6.
122. *J. A. S. B.*, XLI, I, p. 81; *J. B. O. R. S.*, 1

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remains of the period. As given in the *Kālikā Purāṇa*, (Chap. 69) Assamese garments were known as *vastra* or *ācchādana*. The use of both stiched (*sūcīvidhaṁ*) and unstitched garments is referred to in the same *Purāṇa* (69/2). Normally, as appears from the sculptures, the male dress consisted of a *paridhāna*, described in detail in the *Kālikā Purāṇa* (69/5), like the present day '*dhoti*' or undergarment, worn round the waist, held tight by a *pariveśa* in the waist and with folds in the front, hanging down to the knee or just below it. Bāṇa states that Harṣa gave one *pariveśa* to Haṁsavega.[123] The same authority mentions leather *pariveśa*. The upper garments, called *uttarīya* (*K.P.* 69/5), were specially used by the higher classes. No use of shirts is found in the sculptured specimens. The males of distinctive status used a head dress, ordinarily called *pāgurī* (turban).[124] In the religious ceremony at Kanauj the king Bhāskara wore a tiara on his head.[125] The practice has been long continued, and even now the villagers of social position wear turbans, or a single head-dress of a piece of cloth , worn round the head. Qazim, a later Muslim writer, refers to its use.[126] The tribes have been accustomed to the use of head-dresses of various kinds; the Khāsis and the Maṇipuris have had a special liking for it.

Women had distinctive garments according to their status, married and unmarried. In general, they used two garments, upper and lower, hung from above the waist and fastened by a '*nīvībandha*'. The complete dress consisted of a girdle (*mekhalā*) worn round the waist, if there was an upper garment, (blouse) or just above the breast with a '*rihā*', worn round the waist and breast and a '*cādara*' (upper garment), one end of which was coiled round the waist just over the '*rihā*' and the other end placed across the breast and a shoulder behind. The garments were usually ornamented with embroidery and a particular dress indicated one's status in the society. The poor had to remain satisfied with a simple girdle and an upper garment (*cādara*).[126a] Married women wore veils and took particular care of their hair dressing with the help of combs, made of ivory, wood and bamboo, called in Assamese '*kākoi*' (*kaṅkatikā*). The Bargāon grant refers to the use of jewelled mirrors (*maṇimaya-darpaṇa*) by women in their coquetries. The '*tilaka*' (a mark, made of red paste) on the

123. *H. C.* (Cowell), p. 215.
124. The wearing of turbans was most common among the Āhom rulers and their officers.
125. *Life*, pp. 165f.
126. *A. Res.*, II, pp. 170f.
126a. This has been the typical dress also of the tribal women, as well as of the Assamese village womenfolk.

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forehead between the eye-brows indicated their married status as well as feminine grace.

The existing materials refer to the use of cotton, varieties of silk, woollen and leather garments, both simple or dyed and embroidered. The development of cottage industries and an almost universal use of handlooms in every Assamese house-hold provided adequate clothing for the Assamese in general. There was, moreover, a special class of weavers (tantuvāyas) who might have supplied the needs of people. The *Kālikā Purāṇa* (68/12;69/2) mentions varieties of garments, made of *karpāsa* (cotton), *kambala* (wool), *valka* (bark), *koṣaja* (silk from cocoons) and hemp cloth (*śāṇavastraṁ*): *valkalaṁ koṣajaṁ śāṇaṁ vastrametattrayaṁ mataṁ / romajaṁ kambalañcaitadanena tu catuṣṭayaṁ* //. We have dealt with the question of the extensive manufacture of these various kinds of cloths in another connection, and on the basis of the Indian and classical sources beginning with the first century A.D. we have also pointed out the importance of ancient Assam in the production of both raw and manufactured silk. On the basis of Kauṭilya's reference to *kṣauma*, *dukūla* and *patrorṇa* in connecion with their production in *Suvarṇakuḍya* and other places in Kāmarūpa,[127] and on a comparison with the various references, made to these in the *Harṣacarita*,[128] we have tried to show that these were nothing but the Assamese *eḍi*, *mugā* and *pāṭ* silk of Assam.

The use of garments, made of fibres or barks of trees has been most common among the tribes. The *eḍi* cloths are warm and were used, as now, by all classes of peoples during winter.[129] The *mugā* cloths were generally used by the wealthier classes in all seasons;[130] *pāṭ* garments were usually worn by females of the higher and wealthier classes, and the males used them particularly on festive occasions. Both *mugā* and *pāṭ* cloths are fine and costly.[131] We have already referred to the manufacture of embroidered and variously coloured garments. Important mention of painted and variously dyed cloths is found in the *Harṣacarita*, which includes some of them among the presents of Bhāskara to Harṣa.[132]

127. *Arthaśāstra*, (S. S. tr.) pp. 92f; Com. of Bhaṭṭasvāmī, *J. B. O. R. S.*, IX, pp. 40f.

128. *H. C.* (Cowell), pp. 212f.

129. See Stack, *Silk in Assam* (Notes on Some Industries of Assam), 1884-95, pp. 6-12; Duarah, *Eḍi Silk of Assam*, pp. 77f.

130. See B. C. Allen, *Monograph on the Silk cloths of Assam*, 1899; Stack, pp. 13-21; F. Hamilton, *Account of Assam*, p. 62.

131. See Thos Hugon, *J. A. S. B.*, VI, pp. 21-38; J. C. Roy, *J. B. O. R. S.*. III, pp. 180f.

132. *H. C.*, (Cowell) pp. 212f.

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The same reference is found in the *Kālikā Purāṇa* (68/8-16), which mentions varieties of coloured garments and in the accounts of Qazim.[133] Even the classical sources refer to the dyeing of cloths with lac. It is now an universal practice among Assamese women to use embroidered graments. Their girdles, *rihā* and *cādara* contain beautiful specimens of artistic designs, consisting of flowers, creepers, and the like. As given in the *Kālikā Purāṇa*, (69/8), the use of red and yellow garments was auspicious; but on religious occasions, the use of red and blue garments was forbidden. Even to-day Assamese women wear coloured garments while cooking, and their use is most common among the tribal women.

The use of ornaments in ancient India goes back to a very remote period.[134] In Assam the practice is proved both by literature and sculptures. We have noticed elsewhere the epigraphic evidence of the various kinds of wares and jewellers' shops with ornaments.[135] The *Kālikā Purāṇa* (69/17-23) gives an exhaustive list of Assamese ornaments made of gold, silver and other metal, used by women from head to foot. In actual practice, only a few of them may have been used by the wealthier people. The ornaments were usually made of gold and silver, and the main designs were worn in the feet, fingers, arms, wrists, neck and the forehead. The *Kālikā Purāṇa* (69/33) states that silver ornaments could not be used above the neck : (*grīvordhadeśe raupyntu na kadācicca bhūṣaṇaṁ.*) The same *Purāṇa* states that iron and bell metal ornaments could not be worn, and those of other metals could be used only for the lower part of the body. But it is doubtful whether in actual practice such rules were followed. The sculptured specimens testify to the use of necklace (*hāra*), of beads in particular; sometimes a pendant was attached to it in the middle; a flat necklace was called *galpaṭā*. The *keyūra* and *aṅgada* were worn on the upper arms. The bracelet was known as *kaṅkaṇa*. The use of bangles was also known. *Kuṇḍalas* (ear-rings) were used in ears, and *nūpuras* (anklets) in the feet; *kinkiṇī* with attached small bells, as appears from the Tezpur grant of Vanamāla, were worn by unmarried girls. *Lalāṭikā* was worn on the forehead just below the hair by married women. The use of ornaments, however, depended upon individuals, and the poor could hardly aflord to wear precious ornaments.

The use of perfumes and cosmetics is also indicated by some sources. We have mentioned elsewhere the abundance of agaru and sandal wood, musk of deer, *gośīrṣa* and other scented oil, as mentioned both in literature,

133. *A. Res.*, II, 173-74.
134. See Dikshit, *Prehistoric Civilisation of the Indus Valley*, pp. 50f.
135. c.f. Bargāon grant (Second plate), V 14.

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including the classical sources, and epigraphs. On the basis of the *Arthaśāstra* we have also mentioned different varieties of sandal and aloe wood from various places of Assam, like *Joṅga*, *Doṅga*, *Grāmeru*, *Jāpa*, *Turūpa*, etc. The same source gives an exhaustive list of perfumes (*taila-parṇikas*) from Assam, such as *Aśokagrāmaka*, *Joṅgaka*, *Grāmeruka*, *Suvarṇakuḍyaka*, *Pūrṇadvīpaka*, *Pāralauhityaka*, *Āntarvātya*, *Kālakeya*, etc.[136] This is supported by the *Harṣacarita*.[137] The *Kālikā Purāṇa* (69, vv 37-53; 86/39) further points to the use of various perfumes, such as *cūrṇīkṛta* (powder), *ghṛṣṭa* (paste), *dāhakarṣita* (ashes), *sammardajarasa* (juice), *prāṇyaṅgodbhava* (like musk) etc., in which are included varieties of *Kumkuma*, *Kālāguru*, *Kastūrī* and *Karpūra*.

The use of scented oil by women, and even by men, before and after bath, has been a common practice among the Assamese. The Tezpur grant (v. 30) mentions that women used scented oil and anointed their breasts with odorous substances. The use of perfume was believed to increase one's beauty and grace; it was also used in sacrifices and ceremonies; sandal paste in particular has been universally used in all religious and social ceremonies. The *Kālikā Purāṇa* (69/53) lays special stress on the importance of the use of perfumes, particularly in the worship of deities;

grandhena labhate kāmān gandho dharmapadaḥ sadā |
arthānāṁ sādhano gandho gandhe mokṣaḥ pratiṣṭhitaḥ ||

Another favourite practice of the womenfolk, as given in the *Yoginī Tantra*, was the colouring of their teeth, like the use of *añjana* for their eyes. The blackening of the teeth is even now practised by some Assamese village women.

Of the other articles of luxury, mention may be made of fans, made particularly of bamboo, cane and date-palm tree, garlands, foot-wear, umbrellas, *jāpis* (sun hats) prepared from date-palm trees, etc. Foot-wear was made of wood (*khaḍam*) and deer hide. The grant of Vallabhadeva refers to sandals with leather straps.[138] Umbrellas were usually made of cotton cloth. It may be noted that the *ābhoga* umbrella of the rulers of ancient Assam stood for the royal insignia;[139] the *jāpi* was used as its substitute by the Āhom rulers. *Chatra* and *jāpi* were often used as shades over deities. With these few articles of luxury and necessities of life, the average Assamese lived rather a simple life.

136. Bhaṭṭasvāmī, Com., *J. B. O. R. S.*, pp. 36-40; *Śrīmūla Com.*, pp. 189-90.
137. *H. C.* (Cowell) pp. 212f.
138. *E. I.*, V, pp. 181f.
139. *H. C.*, (Cowell) pp. 213-14.

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8. Conclusion :

The foregoing treatment of the subject gives us an idea of the state of social life of the people of Assam prior to the Āhom period. Though details are lacking to arrive at a definite conclusion on the question of the social progress of the period, we have shown reasons to believe that harmony among different groups was the key-note of the system, and the non-Aryans and pre-Aryans in particular largely contributed to and influenced the level of Hindu social structure almost in all its aspects. The comparative laxity in marriage relations, dietary practices, etc., which broadly characterised the Assamese social life had been mainly due to the nature of Assam's population and influence of the Tāntrik system. Nonetheless, the state of social progress, obtaining in ancient Assam, may well be compared with that of any part of India of the same period. Nay, marked by self-reliance in meeting abundantly the individual and collective needs of food and clothing, the Assamese simple diet and decent dresses together with their liberal, refined social manners in general have been but the assets of the country.

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SECTION 2

ECONOMIC CONDITION

1. Agriculture—paddy and other products :

Neither literature nor epigraphy depicts the economic pursuits of the people of Assam in the period before the arts of cattle-rearing and cultivation were known. As in other parts of India, Assam no doubt passed through various economic stages. It is worth noting that the stage of hunting was not entirely over among the tribes in Assam until comparatively recent times, and we find traces of it even now among some of those of the inaccessible hills. Along with the *vāstubhūmi*, *kṣetra*, and *khila*, records mention *go*(*pra*)*cārā bhūmi*.[1] The art of cattle-rearing along with cultivation, for which the land was privately owned, was, therefore, an early institution in Assam. When the right of ownership over land was recognised and the art of cultivation was introduced, land, on which depended the main livelihood of the agriculturists, became their real property.

Cultivation was carried on in the beginning by a crude method of '*jhuming*' i.e., by cutting down jungles and trees, setting fire to them, making holes in the land with the help of digging sticks and then sowing seeds without the use of hoe or plough. Even now among most tribes this is the main method employed in cultivation, believed to have been introduced at a very early time. But, with the knowledge of the use of hoes and ploughs, people took to a more complicated process of cultivation. This method of the cultivation of land particularly in the *agrahāra* settlements is proved by the grants. We find also reference to irrigation. This was employed in terraced cultivation, which is believed to have been introduced by the Āngāmi Nagās from the Oceanic World (Philippine Isles).[2] We know from the grants that most of the important towns, villages, and arable lands were situated on the bank of rivers. Moreover, the occurrence of the expressions like '*sajala-sthala*', used in connection with most of the donated lands, and other terms like *jala*, *garta* (pit), *ḍobā*

1. Nowgong grant, Line 36; also Bargāon grant, Line 56, and other grants. The reference is to *vāstu-kedāra-sthala-jala-gopracārābhūmi*.
2. Hutton, *C. R. I.*, 1931, I, I, pp. 444f; Mills, *A. Rev.*, *Aug.*, 1928, pp. 16f.

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(reservoir of water or small tank) etc.,[3] indicates that the arable areas were supplied with water. Even orchards were irrigated by channels. This is proved by the accounts of Yuan Chwang, of the 7th century A.D., who states that "water led from the river or from banked-up lakes (reservoirs) flowed round the towns."[4] Land was, therefore, comparatively fertile and fit for the cultivation of various crops.

The extensive cultivation of paddy, at least from the 6th century A.D., is proved by the fact that the areas of all donated lands are expressed in terms of the measures of paddy they produce. Rice being the staple food, it was natural that the cultivation of paddy constituted one of the chief economic pursuits of the people, whether living in the plains or the hills. Ancient Assamese works refer to summer and winter paddy. The *Yoginī Tantra*, for instance, mentions a number of varieties in connection with the worship of different deities.[5] The cultivation of sugar cane is indicated by the fact that among the presents sent by Bhāskara to Harṣa, included *guḍa* (molasses) prepared from sugarcane in earthen pots.[6] The Muslim travellers and historians of the Āhom period refer to sugarcane, and confirm its cultivation in our period. Qazim, for instance, writes that the sugarcane of Assam "excels in softness and sweetness and is of three colours, red, black and white."[7] Both records and literature refer to the cultivation of pumpkins. Bāṇa mentions among the presents of Bhāskara pumpkin gourds, containing painting materials.[8] The Bargāon grant refers to arable land with clusters(hills) of gourds: (*lābukuṭikṣetra*).[9] The cultivation of various vegetables is mentioned in many works.[10]

The plantation of various fruit trees of different varieties is proved by both records and literature. The inscriptions mention *kaṇṭāphala* (jack fruit), *Āmra* (mango), *Jambu* (eugenia jambollana), *Śrīphala*, *Ḍumbarī* (fig), *Śākhoṭaka* (walnut), *Badarī* (jujube), *Lakuca*, *Āmalaka* (a kind of bread-fruit tree), *Betasa* (gamboze), *Pūga*, (betel nut), *Coraka* (a kind of wild palm tree), *Rudrāṣka* (bead tree) and many sour fruits, such as '*Au*' (dillenis indica) '*Tentelī*' and others. The abundance of jack fruit and coconut is evidenced by Yuan Chwang who states that in Kāma-

3. Nidhanpur grant, last plate.
4. Watters, *Yuan Chwang*, II, pp. 185f.
5. *Chap*. II, 5, 289-91.
6. *H. C.* (Cowell) pp. 212f.
7. *A. Res*, II, p. 173.
8. *H. C.* (Cowell) pp. 212f.
9. Hoernle, *J. A. S. B.*, LXVII, I, pp. 89f; for different interpretation of the expression, see *K. S.*, p. 107, f. n. 7.
10. *Yoginī Tantra*, II/9.

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rūpa "the jack fruit and coconut were in great esteem though plentiful."[11] We are not sure whether oranges were grown during our period. But Qazim at a later time mentions them along with others. He writes that Assam "produces mangoes, plantains, jacks, oranges, citrons, limes, pineapples and punialeh, a species of amleh which has such an excellence of flavour that every person who tastes it, prefers it to the plum. There are also coconut trees, pepper vines, areca trees and *sadij* (malabothrum) in great plenty."[12] Not only mangoes but also a preparation of mango juice was sent by Bhāskara to Harṣa. Bāṇa states that the Kāmarūpa king sent bamboo tubes containing mango juice.[13] A particular mention of the different uses of the plantain tree is found in Tavernier.[14] The extensive plantation of areca nut and betel vine is supported by a number of literary sources and epigraphy. This is mentioned in the Aphsad inscription of Ādityasena,[15] Nowgong Grant (v. 5), *Harṣacarita*,[16] *Yoginī Tantra*, Qazim,[17] *Fathiyah-i-Ibriyah*[18] and other sources. The plantation of *haridrā* (turmeric), *ārdraka* (ginger), *jīraka* (cumin), *pippalīyaka* (long pepper), *marīca* (pepper), *sariṣā* (mustard), *karpūra* and others is evidenced by the *Yoginī Tantra*.[19] The same reference is found in the *Kālikā Purāṇa* (69-70) which also mentions a large number of precious trees including *sarala*, *śāla*, *candana* and *agaru*.

Black pepper[20] was an extensively cultivated product of Assam, like lac.[21] Qazim, as we have noted, refers to pepper as one of the products of the land. The earliest reference to the lac insect is perhaps made by the classical writers. Ctesias and Aelian mention the fruit of a tree called *siptachora* from which amber exuded and upon which there was found a small insect yielding a purple dye. The tree is said to have been found in abundance in the country of Seres; the insect alluded to must be the lac insect. The region referred to is Lower Assam.[22] Ctesias

11. *Watters*, II, pp. 185f; *Si yu ki*, II, pp. 195f.
12. *A. Res.*, II, p. 173; also Uttarbarbil plates of Balavarman: (*Asom Sāhitya Sabhā Patrikā*, 15th year, Vol. III.)
13. *H. C.* (Cowell, pp. 212f).
14. *Travels in India*, II, p. 282; also *Kumāra-Haraṇa*, V 208.
15. *C. I. I.*, III, pp. 200f.
16. *H. C.* (Cowell), pp. 212f.
17. *A. Res*, II, p. 173.
18. *J. A. S. B.*, LXVII, I, p. 117. (f. n. 20); *J. B. O. R. S.*, I.
19. II/7, 9; see also *Kumāra-Haraṇa*, *V* 207.
20. Basu, *Cultivation of black pepper in Assam*, *Bulletin*, *Agr. Dept.*, Assam, 1898 (N. 4); also Watt, *Commercial Products of India*, p. 897.
21. Basu, *A Note on the Lac Industry of Assam*, Shillong, 1900; Watt, *Commercial Products*, etc., p. 1059.
22. See Taylor, *J. A. S. B.*, 1847, I, p. 47; Wilford, *A. Res*, IX, p. 65.

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further mentions that the country of *siptachora* produced all good things.[23] These included besides lac and other dyes, silk, aloe, musk, ivory, gold, etc., which were exported to India via the Brahmaputra.[24] This is confirmed by the later historian Tavernier, who states that Assam "produces an abundance of shellac of —a red colour—it is the best lac in the whole of Asia for these purposes."[25] The production of *tejpāt* (malabothrum of the classical writers) was extensive in Assam. Watt rightly points out that it was mainly grown in Assam and Burma.[26] The classical works, beginning at least with the 1st century A.D., associate the production of and trade in this article with the Sesatae, identified with some hill tribes of Assam.[27] The articles of trade of these people, mentioned as petros and malabothrum, were the bark and leaves of *tejpāt* from Assam. The hill tribes of the classical writers like the Gāros, inhabiting the areas of the Garo Hills, Sylhet , etc., which were famous for the production of malabothrum, extracted an essence from it, as mentioned by Sir William Jones.[28] The abundance of *sadij* (*tejpāt*) is also testified by Qazim.[29] In fact, articles like *tejpāt* and *mānjit* have been extensively cultivated in the hills and forests of Assam, mostly by tribes like the Gāros, Ābars and Mishmis. All these statements indicate that important and essential agricultural products were produced in Assam from early times.

2. Fishing and Hunting :

We have mentioned in another connection that, the people of Assam, whether Aryans or non-Aryans, were both fish and meat eaters. Epigraphs mention a class of people, called *Kaivartas*,[30] whose main profession was most probably fishing· The profession may have been practised by individuals for their personal use as well. The articles used for catching fish were nets, traps, bamboo rods, armed with iron nails; another device, consisted of poisoning the river or a pond with a kind of herbs. No evidence of angling is found from our period. Most of these devices seem to have been borrowed from the tribes, because such modern words as

23. Heeren, *Asiatic Nations*, II, App. IV, p. 380.
24. *J. A. S. B.*, 1847, I, p. 47.
25. *Travels in India*, II, pp. 281-82.
26. *Commercial Products of India*, pp. 310f.
27. McCrindle, *The Commerce and Navigation of the Erythrean Sea*, pp. 145-49; Vincent, *The Periplus*, II, pp. 523f; Schoff, *Periplus*, pp. 47-49; 261, 278-79; Gerini, *Researches on Ptolemy's Geography*, p. 830.
28. See Taylor, *J. A. S. B.*, 1847, I, pp. 32f, 46.
29. *A. Res.*, II, p. 173.
30. Tezpur Rock Inscription, *J. B. O. R. S.*, 1917, pp. 508f;also Gauhāti grant of Indrapāla, line 47; Puṣpabhadrā grant of Dharmapāla, line 51.

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lāṅgi (a kind of fishing net) and *khokā* (a kind of fish trap) are of Tibeto-Burman origin.[31]

Inscriptions also refer to the hunting of animals, evidently for meat and also for pleasure. This was a very ancient practice, particularly among the non-Aryan tribes. We have, however, no evidence of professional hunters. Hunting was usually done with bows and arrows, sometimes poisoned, spears, nets and snares, and digging pits in the jungles. As with fishing, the various devices used in hunting may largely have been borrowed from the tribes. The Doobi grant makes an incidental reference to the snaring of a deer.[32] The grants of Indrapāla refer to the catching of tigers, in connection with the daring exploits of the prince Purandarapāla, who "being passionately fond of the chase gave more than once extraordinary proofs of it by the way in which he captured hostile kings, like tigers, in nettings of arrows improvised for the occasion."[33] The plates of Vallabhadeva seem to refer to buffalo hunting.[34] The abundance of elephants in Assam, and the use of ivory as an article of trade and industry point to the conclusion that elephants were caught for various purposes and sometimes killed for ivory. Kālidāsa refers to elephants, caught in the forests of Assam.[35] Both fishing and hunting, therefore, constituted one of the important occupations of the people. But, the existing materials do not show that a considerable section of the people depended entirely on these pursuits.

3. Industries :

(i) *Weaving, Sericulture, Embroidery and Dyeing* : In the development of various industrial products, the craftsmen of Kāmarūpa had a place in ancient India. The economic wealth of the country played a considerable part in the evolution of these crafts. Whether in the art of weaving and sericulture, or working in metal, ivory, wood, leather, clay, cane, bamboo and the like, their reputation was equal, if not superior, to that of the craftsmen of other parts of contemporary India. This is evidenced by literature, foreign accounts and epigraphy, which mention different professional classes, like weavers, spinners, dyers, smiths, workers in ivory, metal, wood, cane, bamboo, etc.

31. Kākati, *Assamese—Its Formation and Development.*, p. 77.
32. *J. A. R. S.*, XII, pp. 16f.
33. Gauhāti Grant, V 12; Guākuchi Grant, V 12.
34. *E. I.*, V, pp. 181-88.
35. *Canto*, IV, V 83.

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Besides the professional *tantuvāyas*, we have evidence of the extensive manufacture of cloths, and, of the cottage industries, the hand-loom industry has always occupied an important place in every Assamese household, which probably contained as now a hand-loom, besides other articles for weaving and spinning. Hand-looms of a crude form are to be found even to-day among certain tribes. Cotton shrubs were grown for the manufacture of cotton cloths.[36] The early use of cotton (*tulāpāt*) as a writting material is proved by some old Assamese manuscripts. Writing material was produced by pressing cotton so as to make it into something like a sheet of paper.[37] The use of *karpāsa* (cotton) garments is also shown by the *Kālikā Purāṇa*[38] of the 10th century A.D. and the *Harṣacarita*.[39] During the Āhom period the weavers had a good reputation. They were even employed for the supply of royal robes of the Āhom kings. The usual process of manufacture involved treating the threads with some gummy substance, prepared generally from pounded rice, to make them hard before their use in the loom. There was an extensive supply of cotton clothes, and the art reached a stage of perfection.[40] The *Kālikā Purāṇa* proves also the use and manufacture of woollen garments (*kambala*), bark cloths (*valka*) silk (*koṣaja*) and hemp cloth (*śāṇavastraṁ*).[41] Bark cloths were made of fibres of trees and plants. The process is best known to most tribes of Assam, who manufacture excellent fabrics of various designs even to-day.[42] Among the presents from Bhāskara to Harṣa, there were cloths, smooth as birch-bark.[43] Old Assamese manuscripts were written on barks, prepared specially from aloe wood, and other barks called *sāñcipāt*. An early reference to a variety of bark cloth worn by the *kirātas*, forming the army of Bhagadatta is made by the *Mahābhārata* (*Sabhā Parvan*) which refers to *śṛṅkhala* cloths.

The art of sericulture, and the rearing of cocoons for the manufacture of various silk cloths, were known to the Assamese as early as the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Arthaśāstra*. The former mentions *Magadha*, *Aṅga*, *Puṇḍra*

36. See W. Hamilton, *East India Gazetteer*, pp. 40-42.
37. *Des. Cat. of Assamese Manuscripts* (Introduction).
38. Chap. 69, V 2.; 68/12.
39. *H. C.* (Cowell), pp. 212f.
40. See Samman, *Monograph on the Cotton Fabrics of Assam*, 1897.
41. *Chap.* 69, V 2.; 68/12. See also (Section I).
42. See Hutton, *Angami Nagas*, pp. 60f, 72f; Butler, *J. A. S. B.*, 1875, I. p. 324; Godden, *J. R. A. I.*, XXVII, p. 7; Woodthrope, *J. R. A. I.*, XI, p. 62; Playfair, *Garos*, pp. 33f; 45, 56f; Walker, '*The Garo manufacture of Bark Cloth*', *Man*, 1927, pp. 15-16; Robinson, *Account of Assam*, pp. 415f.
43. *H. C.* (Cowell), pp. 212f.

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and the "country of the cocoon rearers." : (*koṣa-kārāṇāṁ bhūmiḥ*),[44] which was no other than Kāmarūpa,[45] lying to the east of Puṇḍra. The Classical writers, beginning at least with the 1st century A.D., make important mention of the production of silk and the silk trade in and through Assam. The *Periplus* refers to both raw and manufactured silk,[46] which were from Thina or Assam.[47] Pliny gives a description of the people of Seres who were noted for silk, which their forests produced.[48] We have already stated elsewhere that the reference is to Assam. Dionysius mentions people, similar to the Sesatae of the *Periplus*, of Assam, and he refers to the *tassar* or *mugā* silk of Assam , which was variously dyed.[49] Ammianus Marcellinus, describing the people of Seres, mentions silk under the name of *sericum*, and the people are said to have been expert in the production of silk, which was exported to different countries.[50] Schoff, on the basis of the *Periplus*, contends that the silk industry originated in China and travelled from there to Assam and other parts of India.[51] In the opinion of Watt, it originated in Maṇipur in Assam. He also adds that this place "was the home of the silkworm—that the real mulberry silk insect originated in Maṇipur and went from there in to China."[52] Silk was, however, known in China as early as the Shang Period, (1523-1027 B.C.).[53] It is difficult to fix a date for the knowledge of silk industry in Assam, but it was known at least as early as the period of the *Arthaśāstra* and the *Rāmāyaṇa*, if not earlier. As the industry was mainly confined in the past to the Tibeto-Burman elements in Assam, it is not unlikely that along with their migration to Assam they introduced some ideas from China; but the manufacture of *mugā* silk has been confined to Assam alone, and this land, like China, had a world wide reputation in the manufacture of varieties of silk cloths, and had a profitable foreign trade in such articles.

The varieties of silk from Assam are *eḍi* or *eraṇḍi*, (attacus ricini) made from the silk of the worm of the same name; *mugā* (antheroea Assamoea) from a cocoon of the same name and *pāṭ* (*paṭṭa*). The rearing of *eḍi* cocoons takes a long time before they provide silk, fit for spinning;

44. *Kiṣkindhyākāṇḍa*, 40.
45. See J. C. Roy, *J. B. O. R. S.*, III, pp. 211f.
46. Vincent, *The Periplus*, II, pp. 523f.
47. Taylor, *J. A. S. B.*, 1847, I, pp. 29f.
48. Schoff, *The Periplus*, p. 267; *J. A. S. B.*, 1847, I, pp. 43f.
49. See *J. A. S. B.*, 1847, I, pp. 43f.
50. *Ibid*, pp. 68f.
51. *The Periplus*, p. 264.
52. *J. S. A.*, (No. 2733), LIII, p. 562; also Hodson, *Meitheis*, pp. 39f.
53. L. Carrington Goodrich, *Short History of the Chinese People*, p. 17.

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the cocoons are fed, as the name indicates, on castor plants.[54] The *eḍi* cloths are usually white with a yellowish tinge, smooth as well as rough and very warm, used during winter.[55] As the Latin name indicates, the *mugā* silk is chiefly associated with Assam , though perhaps a small quantity is produced in Dehra Dun.[56] The *mugā* has varieties like the *campā*, the cocoons of which are fed on the *campā* tree (michelia champaka) and the *mejāṅkari* or *ādākari*, feeding on the plants of the same name.[5] The mugā cloths are usually yellowish with the tinge of gold and are often' dyed red with lac.[58] The *pāṭ* silk is the product of *bombyx textor* and *bombyx croesi*; the cocoons are fed on the mulberry trees. Of all the silk cloths, the *pāṭ* fibres are the smoothest and the finest, with a mixture of white yellowish tinge.

We have noted that the varieties of silk cloths are mentioned in the *Arthaśāstra* which makes an important reference to *kṣauma*, *dukūla*, and *patrorṇa* fabrics from *Suvarṇakuḍya* and other places in Kāmarūpa.[59] Some writers are of the opinion that *Suvarṇakuḍya* later came to be known as *Karṇasuvarṇa* in Bengal.[60] That this contention is wrong and that it was a place in Kāmarūpa, is shown by the expression : (*Kāmarūpe caiva Suvarṇakuḍyaḥ* and *Kāmarūpeṣu Suvarṇakuḍyakaḥ*).[61] It is likely that the modern *Soṇkuḍihā* in Kāmarūpa stands for *Suvarṇakuḍya*. K. L. Baruā rightly points out that the place was an important commercial centre and "must have then contained a settlement of merchants who traded not only in silk but also in fabrics manufactured from fibres and fragrant substances."[62] The evidence from the *Arthaśāstra* is confirmed in details by Bāṇa, whose *Harṣacarita* gives valuable evidence on the industrial resources of Assam during the time of Bhāskara. It may, however, be that the

54. See Duarah, *Eḍi Silk of Assam* (Notes on some Industries of Assam, 1884-95), pp. 77-111.
55. Stack, *Silk in Assam* (Notes on some Industries of Assam, 1884-1895); Watt, *Commercial Products*, pp. 1012f.
56. B. C. Allen, *Monograph on the Silk cloths of Assam*, 1899; Watt, *Commercial Products*, pp. 1009f.
57. Stack, *Silk in Assam*, pp. 13-21.
58. F. Hamilton, *Account of Assam*, pp. 61-62.
59. *Arthaśāstra*, BK, II, XI, 80-81.
60. H. P. Śāstrī, *B. S. P. P.*, (B. S.) 1326, p. 249; S. K. Chatterji, *Origin & Development of the Bengali Language*, Intro., p. 70.
61. Com. of Bhaṭṭasvāmī, *J. B. O. R. S.* 1925, pp. 40-46; G. Śāstrī, *Arthaśāstra with Śrīmūla Com.*, I, p. 190; N. N. Dasgupta, *I. C.*, V, pp. 339f; *J. A. R. S.*, VII, pp. 24f; H. V. Trivedi, *I. C.*, I, pp. 258f; N. L. Dey, *Geog. Dictionary*, p. 215; J. C. Roy, *J. B. O. R. S.*, III, pp. 193f; K. L. Barua, *J. A. R. S.*, VII, pp. 78f.
62. *J. A. R. S.*, VII, pp. 29f.

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work contains some exaggerated accounts and all the presents sent by Bhāskara to Harṣa might not have been wrought by Assamese artists and craftsmen of his time, as the king is said to have inherited some of them from his ancestors ; but most of them appear to be indigenous products. Bāṇa writes that Bhāskara sent to Harṣa *Kṣauma* cloths (*kṣaumāṇi*), white as the Autumn's moonlight.[63] *Dukūla* finds mention in the Bargāon grant of Ratnapāla (L. 38) which states that it was used in making a flag: (*dūkula-kadali-Kapāṭa*.) As Bāṇa mentions again, Bhāskara sent to Harṣa the *ābhoga* umbrella wrapped in a *dukūla* cloth. The author mentions also a variety of *pāṭ* cloth among the presents, such as sacks of silk, woven out of *paṭṭasūtra*.[64] The presents, therefore, included all the best specimens of *eḍi*, *mugā* and *pāṭ*.

There is, however, a controversy among writers in respect of identification of *kṣauma*, *dukūla* and *patrorṇa* of the *Arthaśāstra*. Kullūka explains *kṣauma* as a cloth made of *atasī* fibre.[65] J. C. Roy takes it as a linen and *dukūla* as fine linen. He adds that both, originally standing for linen, came to be applied to other fabrics, even to silk. He takes *patrorṇa* as either *eḍi* or *mugā* cloth.[66] S. Śāstry takes *kṣauma* as flax; *dukūla* as soft fabric, like cotton, and *patrorṇa* as fibre garments.[67] K.L. Barua seems to identifiy *dukūla* as *mugā* and holds that it may also stand for linen and other similar cloth; *kṣauma*, according to him, is not merely linen but may also stand for any fabric of cotton, silk or mixture of both. *Patrorṇa*, in his opinion, is a kind of fabric, prepared from bark and leaves.[68] B. K. Barua seems to take both *kṣauma* and *dukūla* as bark fibres.[69] But, the *Harṣacarita*, by its reference to the colour of *kṣauma*, makes it clear that it is no other than the present *eḍi* cloth of Assam. The *eḍi* cloth is usually white, with a yellowish tinge. As regards *dukūla*, Kauṭilya himself states that the best type was from *Suvarṇakuḍya* and it was "as red as the sun, as soft as the surface of the gem, woven while the threads are very wet, and of uniform or mixed texture."[70] As the colour suggests, *dukūla* was no other than *mugā* silk. The process of weaving also points to the same conclusion. *Patrorṇa* from *Suvarṇakuḍya*

63. *H. C.* (Cowell), pp. 212f.

64. *Ibid.*

65. *Amarakoṣa*, II, 6, 116: (*dukūla* is taken to be the usual name for the finest *kṣauma*).

66. *J. B. O. R. S.*, III, pp. 193f, 211f.

67. *Arthaśāstra* (Tr.) p. 82. According to com. *dukūla* is a fine fabric and *Kṣauma* is little coarse.

68. *J. A. R. S.*, VII, pp. 78-82.

69. *Cultural History*, I, pp. 126f.

70. *Arthaśāstra* (S. S. tr.) p. 82.

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again is considered to be the best: (*tāsāṁ Suvarṇakuḍyakā śreṣṭhā*).[71] It was no other than the finest *paṭṭasūtra* of the *Harṣacarita* and the present *pāṭ* of Assam, with a yellowish white colour.

The evidence from the *Arthaśāstra*, the *Harṣacarita* and the classical writers among others prove that in the art of the rearing of silk cocoons and the weaving of the finest silk textiles, the weavers of Kāmarūpa had a reputation equal to those of China. The tradition has been continued to the present times.[72] This is confirmed by observations of some later writers. Qazim, for instance, writes that the silk of Assam was very excellent, resembling that of China.[73] Tavernier remarks that the silk of Assam was produced on trees and the stuffs made of them were very brilliant.[74] The industry, therefore, was continued throughout the centuries, and Assam's silk fabrics are much esteemed in India.

The art of embroidery and the manufacture of dyeing materials have also been known from early times. Important reference to coloured cloths is made by Bāṇa, who states that Bhāskara sent to Harṣa variously coloured and painted cloths, and smooth as birch bark with the patterns of jasmine flowers : (*Bhūrjatvak komalāḥ jātī paṭṭikāḥ*).[75] These specimens were either *mugā* or *pāṭ* cloths. The *Kālikā Purāṇa* (69) makes a particular reference to the variously ornamented cloths in connection with the gifts to different deities. The same work (54/22; 69/8) refers to the use and manufacture of variously coloured cloths like *raktaṁ*, *kauśeyaṁ*, *nīlaṁ*, in connection with the worship of deities. The manufacture of coloured cloths is also mentioned by later writers like Qazim, who writes that the Assamese people made an extensive use of them, and were also expert in embroidery work and the weaving of velvet cloths.[76] The lac was one of the important dyes. We have already made reference to Ctesias and Aelien, who mentioned the lac insect feeding on a tree, called *siptachora*, which yielded purple dye,[77] and we have also stated that the reference

71. *Arthaśāstra*, BK. II, chap. XI, 81; (tr. S. S.), p. 83.
72. See Helfer (On the Indigenous Silk worms of India), *J. A. S. B.*, VI, 43; J. C. Roy, *J. B. O. R. S.*, III, pp. 180-245; *Some Industries of Assam*, Shillong, 1896, pp. 1-28, 77-111; Geoghegan, *Some Account of Silk in India*, pp. 16-17; Thos. Hugon, *Remarks on the silkworms and Silk of Assam*, *J. A. S. B.*, VI, pp. 21-38; N. C. Bandopadhyaya, *Economic Life*, etc., p. 61; W. Hamilton, *East India Gazetteer*, pp. 40f.
73. *A. Res.*, II, pp. 173-74.
74. *Travels*, II, 281.
75. *H. C.* (Cowell), pp. 212-215.
76. *A. Res*, II, pp. 173-74.
77. Wilford, *A. Res*, IX, p. 65.

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is to the people of Seres or ancient Assam.[78] The insect was also reared on different species of the ficus tree. The material was produced by the insects feeding on those trees.[79] It is, however, doubtful whether a systematic manufacture of lac was known in ancient times. The later traveller, Tavernier, referring to the manufacture of lac in Assam, writes that the people produced sufficient shellac, of a red colour ; with it they dyed their calicoes and other stuffs and when they extracted the red colour, they used the lac to lacquer cabinets and other objects of the kind, and prepared wax from it.[80]

The art of dyeing, therefore, was an ancient practice in Assam; the threads were either dyed before their use in the loom to manufacture variously coloured cloths, or the finished garments were dyed red, black, yellow, blue and the like. The materials were not only lac and indigo, called 'rumdye' in Assam,[81] but were also prepared from various roots, leaves and barks of trees, like khoir (acacia catechu), acanthaceae and other ingredients, which made fast and dazzling colours.[82] The manufacture of coloured garments has a speciality with the tribes, and it is likely that the Assamese Hindus imitated their use from them.

To conclude, Assam produced all specimens of fine garments, both simple and coloured, and made important progress in all the allied industries.[83] Whether in the art of weaving or in the rearing of silkworms and the manufacture of dyed cloths, the tribes, like the Khāsis, Nagās, Maṇipuris and the Boḍos in general, had a great deal to contribute towards their development. Even to-day they produce them in plenty and supply the needs of thier neighbours.[84] It is likely that the art of sericulture, weaving, etc , was introduced into Assam at an early period by the pre-Aryans. Boḍos and the allied tribes. The place names like *Joṅga*, *Doṅga*, etc., occurring in the *Arthaśāstra*,[85] associated with the industrial products of Kāmarūpa, which have a Boḍo origin, only support our contention.[86] It

78. Taylor, *J. A. S. B.*, 1847, I, p. 47.
79. See *Note on the Lac Industry of Assam*, Shillong, 1900.
80. *Travels*, II, 281-82.
81. Watt, *Commercial Products of India*, pp. 628, 1051.
82. See Duncan, *Monograph on Dyes and Dyeing in Assam*, pp. 5f.
83. See J.C. Roy, *J.B.O.R.S.*, III, pp. 211f.
84. See Gurdon, *Khasis*, pp. 39f ; Dalton, *Ethnology of Bengal*, p. 57; Mills, *Ao Nagas* pp. 90f; Hutton, *Angami, Nagas* pp. 60f; *Angami Naga Dyeing processes, Man*, 1923, pp. 36-38; *Sema Nagas*, pp. 46f; Mills, *Lhota Nagas*, pp. 36f, 125f; *Rengma Nagas*, pp. 64f; Hodson, *Naga Tribes*, pp. 39f; *Meithies*, pp. 22f; Shakespear, *Lushei-Kukis*, pp. 15f; Playfair, *Garos*, pp. 33f; Endle, *Kacharis*, pp. 11f.
85. *Bhaṭṭasvāmī, Com.*, pp. 36-38; *Arthaśāstra*, Bk. II, Chap. XI, 78.
86. See K.L. Barua, *J.A.R.S.*, VII, No. 1, pp. 6-18 and No. 2, pp. 1f; *Ibid*, pp. 29-34.

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is rightly pointed out that coloured cloths are more extensively used and manufactured by the tribes than the people of the plains. Some Nagās have been expert dyers and produce extremely brilliant colours. The Maṇipuris have long been known as skilful and artistic dyers, and they may have been better in this respect than any people of Eastern India.[87]

(ii) *Working in metal, salt and ivory:* The art of working in metal, particularly in gold and silver, and the use of jewellery were practised from early times in ancient India.[88] Gold was found in almost all the rivers of Lakṣīmpur, particularly in Suvaṇśiri, Dikhau, Jaglo and Dihong;[89] those of Śivasāgar;[90] Bharali and Dhanśiri in Darrang;[91] Khāsi Hills along with the iron-ore deposits;[92] Soṇāi in Cāchār,[93] Maṇipur[94] and other places.[95] The earliest reference to the abundance of gold in *Suvarṇakuḍya* in Kāmarūpa is found in the *Arthaśāstra*. On the basis of the practice of gold-washing from the rivers of Assam, N. N. Dasgupta rightly remarks that *Suvarṇakuḍya* was one of the tracts of Assam on the bank of some river which produced plenty of gold.[96] Both Megasthenes and Strabo refer to the people called Derdai, who obtained gold from under the earth. "Among the Derdai", writes Megasthenes, "a great nation of Indians living towards the east and among the mountains, there is a high table land of about 3,000 stadia in circumference. Underneath this are mines of gold which are worked by ants."[97] This probably refers to the abundance of gold in some of the mountains of Assam. We have discussed about the possibility of the land of gold mines of the *Periplus* being somewhere in Assam.[98] Schoff, on the basis of the work, remarks that gold was brought to India through Tripurā from the rivers of Assam and North Burma.[99] The abundance of gold is also confirmed by records. The Tezpur grant states that the river *Lau-*

87. Duncan, *Monograph on Dyes and Dyeing in Assam*, pp. 5f, 28-29, 48-50.
88. Dikshit, *Prehistoric Civilisation of the Indus Valley*, pp. 50f; S.K. Das, *Economic History, etc.*, p. 19.
89. Hunter, *Statistical Account of Assam*, I.
90. *Ibid.*, p. 231.
91. *Ibid.*, pp. 106f.
92. *G.S.I.*, I, Pt. II, p. 207.
93. Hunter, *Statistical Account of Assam*, II, pp. 370f.
94. Pemberton, *Eastern Frontier*, pp. 27f; Hodson, *Meithies*, pp. 1f.
95. Robinson, *Account of Assam*, p. 35f; Watt, *Commercial Products*, pp. 566f.
96. *I.C.*, V, pp. 339-41.
97. McCrindle, *Ancient India as described in Classical Literature*, p. 51.
98. Vincent, *Periplus*, II, 523f; Taylor, *J.A.S.B.*, 1847, I, pp. 25f; McCrindle, *The Commerce and Navigation of the Erythrean Sea* 145f.
99. *The Periplus*, pp. 47-48, 258-59.

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hitya carried down gold-dust from gold-bearing boulders of the *Kailāsa* mountain.[100] We have already stated that the king Jayapāla offered as many as 900 gold coins to a Brāhmaṇa.[101] The Tezpur grant of Vanamāla further records that he re-built the fallen golden temple of *Śiva* (*Hāṭaka Śūlin*) in Hārūppeśvara. It is probable that the reference in the *Arthaśāstra* (II, XII) to a variety of gold called *Hāṭaka*, extracted from the mines of the same name, has a bearing on this, and that such a mine may have existed in the mountains lying to the north of modern Tezpur or at the foot of the Himalayas. The *Kālikā Purāṇa* (80/17) refers to the gold-bearing water of the river Suvarṇaśiri. The historians of the invasion of Bakhtiyar again state that there was a huge image of gold, enshrined in a temple where the invader took refuge when he was surrounded by the Kāmarūpa army. It weighed, according to the *Riyāz-us-salātin*, one thousand maunds.[102] The washing of gold was practised extensively during the Āhom period. Tavernier writes that the practice yielded a substantial quantity, and gold and silk were exported from Assam overland to China.[103] During the Āhom rule, the washing of gold was done by the *Sonowāls*. *Fathiyah-i-Ibriyah*, for instance, records that thousands of people were employed by the Āhom rulers for the purpose.[104] All these statements prove that the practice was an ancient and lucrative economic pursuit.[105]

The existence of a copper mine is probably indicated by the Bargāon grant (L 45) which mentions '*Kamalākara*'. The working on the metal is proved by the existing remains of the copper temple at Sadiyā,[106] and the copper plates of the rulers. The existence of silver in minute quantities is reported from some places[107] and the working in the metal is indicated by the *Kālikā Purāṇa* (69, 17-23, 33) which mentions various ornaments, and states that silver ornaments should not be used above the neck. The work also (70) refers to *sauvarṇa, rājata and tāmrapātras*. As far as we know, we have no existing utensils of metal belonging to our period, except a few specimens of icons, and articles, meant for worship.

100. *J.A.S.B.*, IX, II, pp. 766f.
101. *E.I.*, XIII, pp. 289f.
102. Raverty, II, *Tabaqāt-i-Nāsirī* p. 569; *Riyāz-us-salātin*, p. 67.
103. *Travels*, II, p. 282f.
104. *J.A.S.B.*, XXX, I, pp. 49f.
105. See V. Ball, *Economic Geology of India*, p. 231; Hannay, *J.A.S.B.*, XIV, II, pp. 817-21; Hannay *J.A.S.B.*, XXV, pp. 330-44; *Ibid*, VII, pp. 625-28; Maclaren, *Auriferous Occurrences of Assam*, 1904; W. Hamilton, *East India Gazetteer*, p. 40; *Physical and Political Geography of Assam*, pp. 53f; Wade, *Geographical Sketch of Assam*, pp. 16f.
106. *E.H.K.*, pp. 187f.
107. Robinson, *Descriptive Account of Assam*, p. 35; Hunter, *Statistical Account of Assan*, I, pp. 380f; *Travels in India*, II, p. 281.

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Evidence of the excellent workmanship of the jewellers' art, however, is provided both by literature and epigraphs. Inscriptions refer to various wares, and goldsmiths' shops with varieties of ornaments.[108] The use of ornaments and other articles of metal is not only proved by the sculptured specimens of our period, but also by the *Kālikā Purāṇa*, (69/17-23), which as we have mentioned, refers to ornaments of gold, silver, bellmetal and even of iron. The best specimens of the period were probably included in the presents sent by Bhāskara to Harṣa, which according to Bāṇa, included the *ābhoga* umbrella, ornamented with jewelled ribs; ornaments, which crimsoned the heavenly spaces with the light of the finest gems; shining crest jewels; pearl necklaces which seemed the source of the milk-ocean's whiteness; quantities of pearls, shell, sapphire and other drinking vessels, made by skilful artists; bright gold leaf-work; various birds with the necks bound in golden fetters and enclosed in gold painted cages.[109] The evidence seems to indicate that, whether working on gold, silver or copper,[110] or making various ornaments and wares, the craftsmen of our period and at a subsequent time showed no mean workmanship.[111] Even the art of working on bronze is testified by the existing images of Durgā and Manasā.[111a] The tradition was continued and as a recent writer remarks, "the Assamese—keeps his betel nut in a silver box called *ṭemā* or a plate (*baṭā*) or bowl (*bāṭi*) of silver—and generally speaking, the gold and silver wares of the province consist of articles of personal adornment—Assamese jewellery is by no means without merit."[112]

A brief reference may be made to the working on iron and salt. Iron deposits have been traced throughout the hilly regions of the State, like those of Lakṣīmpur, particularly in Jaipur and Barhāṭ,[113] Śivasāgar,[114] Kāmarūp,[115] Khāsi Hills,[116] Sylhet,[117] Maṇipur,[118] Nagā Hills,[119] Gāro

108. Bargāon grant, V 14
109. H.C. (Cowell), pp. 212-15.
110. See Gait, *Copper and Brass Wares of Assam*, 1894.
111. See J.C. Roy, *J.B.O.R.S.*, III, pp. 221f.
111a. As examined by the author, a large number of icons of bronze along with copper bells were found recently at the hillock of Narakāsurgāon.
112. F.C. Henniker, *The Gold and Silver Wares of Assam*, pp. 1f.
113. Hunter, *Statistical Account of Assam*, I, pp. 299f; *Assam District Gazetteer*, VIII, pp. 12-13.
114. Hunter, *Ibid.*, I, p. 231.
115. *Ibid.*, p. 21.
116. Gurdon, *Khasis*, pp. 57f.
117. Hunter, *Statistical Account of Assam*, II, *p*. 267.
118. Pemberton, *Eastern Frontier*, pp. 27f; Hodson, *Meitheis*, pp. 1f; McCulluch, *Account of the Valley of Munnipore*, pp. 1f; Brown, *Account of the State of Manipur*, pp. 3-9, 22.
119. Hunter, *Statistical Account*, II, pp. 176f.

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Hills,[120] and other regions. According to Pliny, the iron of Serica (Assam) was considered to be the best (xxxiii, xiv).[121] The articles of merchandise mentioned by Ammianus Marcellinus from Seres (Assam) consisted of skin, iron aloe, musk and rhinoceros' horns.[122] The classical sources, therefore, point to the working on iron from early times. Like the washing of gold, the people knew the art of smelting iron from the hills; the Khāsis in particular produced it in considerable quantities. In the opinion of Oldham, Khāsi iron was as excellent for all purposes as the Swedish one, and huge quantities were exported to other parts of the State either in lumps or in the shape of hoes.[123] The use of iron instruments in war also proves the early working on the metal.

The manufacture of salt either from rocks or brine springs was an early practice. Salt was found, as it is now, in the brine springs from Barhāṭ,[124] Śivasāgar,[125] Mikir Hills,[126] Cāchār, from the salt spring in Maṇipur,[127] and many other hilly regions of Assam. The Nagās and the Maṇipuris in particular have been expert in the extraction of this material.[128] The manufacture of salt, like iron, therefore, was largely in the hands of the tribes. Even Tavernier mentions its manufacture from plantain trees and other stuffs.[129] The art of working in ivory was also known to a certain extent. The abundance of elephants in the forests of Assam is testified by all the epigraphs of the period, which also make particular reference to (gajamuktā) elephant pearls.[130] The classical writers also refer to the abundance of elephants in Assam, along with ivory and rhinoceros' horns.[131] We have mentioned that Kālidāsa alludes to the capture of elephants in the jungles of Assam.[132] Yuan Chwang wrote in his accounts that in the south east of Kāmarūpa there were elephants in herds.[133] The biography of the pilgrim states that Bhāskara

120. *Ibid.*, pp. 141f.
121. See Taylor, *J.A.S.B.*, 1847, I, p. 73.
122. *Ibid.*, pp. 68f.
123. See Gurdon, *Khasis*, pp. 57f.
124. Hunter, I, pp. 299f.
125. *Ibid*, I, p. 231.
126. *Ibid.*, II, pp. 370f.
127. Pemberton, pp. 27f; Brown, 3-9, 22; McCulluch, pp. 1f.
128. Hutton, *Angami Nagas*, pp. 60f; Brown, p. 36; Butler *J.A.S.B.*, 1875, p. 324; McCosh, *J.A.S.B.*, 1836, pp. 204-8; Hodson, *Naga Tribes of Manipur*, pp. 39f, 45f; *Meithies*, pp. 22f; Johnstone, *My Experience, etc.*, p. 33.
129. *Travels*, II, p. 283.
130. Bargāon grant, V 14.
131. Taylor, *J.A.S.B.*, 1847, I, pp. 47f, 68f.
132. *Raghuvaṁśa*, IV, V 84.
133. Watters, II, pp. 185f; Beal II, pp. 195f.

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went with him to meet Harṣa with a huge number of elephants.[134] Bāṇa mentions among the presents of Bhāskara to Harṣa "rings of hippopotamus ivory, encrusted with rows of huge pearls from the brows of elephants."[135] Working in ivory is now an extensive, and one of the most artistic industries in Assam, practised not only in the plains but also by some tribes like the Maṇipuris.[136]

(iii) *Wooden works and the manufacture of aromatics* : The art of wood carving is proved by Bāṇa, who writes that the presents from Bhāskara to Harṣavardhana included "carved boxes with panels."[137] The Tezpur grant indicates that a large number of boats in the Brahmaputra were carved with beautiful designs and decorated with ornaments.[138] Wood was used for the making of icons, as proved by an icon of Jagannātha in Kṣetrī in modern Kāmarūp. Speaking of the various articles of wood, a later source *Fathiyah-i-Ibriyah* enumerates wooden boxes, stools, trays and chairs which were made from a single piece of wood.

The forests of Assam were noted for their valuable woods. Epigraphs mention a few of them, viz., sandal wood and agaru, besides others like *Vaṭa* (ficus indica), *Aśvattha* (ficus religiosa), *Madhurāśvattha*, *Śālmali*, *Khadira* (acacia catechu), etc., The same reference is made in the *Kālikā Purāṇa* (70). These were used for both domestic and religious purposes. Classical writers make important mention of aloe and musk from Assam.[139] We have reference to sandal wood and aloe from Kāmarūpa as early as the *Epics*. Bhīma, after his conquest of Prāgjyotiṣa, is said to have received from its king sandal and aloe wood as presents.[140] During the *Rājasūya* ceremony of the Pāṇḍavas, the presents from Prāgjyotiṣa included precious jewels, skin, gold, sandal and aloe wood, and heaps of aromatics.[141] That sandal wood was found in abundance, is evidenced by Kauṭilya. He refers to some of the best varieties like *Joṅgaka* (from *Joṅga*), *Grāmeruka* (*Grāmeru*), *Aupaka* or *Jāpaka* (*Jāpa*) and *Taurūpa*,[142] all of which, in the opinion of the commentator, Bhaṭṭa-

134. *Life of Yuan Chwang*, pp. 165f; Watters, I, p. 348.
135. *H.C.* (Cowell) , pp. 212-15.
136. See W. Hamilton, *East India Gazetteer* pp. 40-42; Donald, *Ivory Carving in Assam*, (1900).
137. *H.C.* (Cowell), pp. 212f.
138. *J.A.S.B.*, IX, II, pp. 766f; (V 30)
139. Taylor, *J.A.S.B.*, 1847, I, p. 47f, 68f.
140. *Sabhā Parvan*, XXX, 28.
141. *Ibid.*, LII.
142. *Arthaśāstra*, II, XI.

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svāmī, were form Kāmarūpa.[143] *Grāmeru* may be identified with the present Grāmerumuri in Kāmarūpa.[144] The *Joṅgaka* and *Taurūpa* varieties were of red or dark-red colour and soft; the *Grāmeruka* was of the same colour but smelt like goat's urine; *Jāpaka* was also red and scented like a lotus. Another variety of sandal wood, called *Nāgaparvataka*, having the colour of *śaivāla* (vallisneria) was rough, and it was probably from the Nagā Hills,[145] where even now it is found in plenty. Bāṇa mentions among the presents from Bhāskara *gośīrṣa* sandal with fine smell.[146] Harṣa gave to Haṁsavega in his court toilet sandal, wrapped in a piece of white cloth, and enclosed in a polished coconut. The *Arthaśāstra* makes similar mention of different varieties of aloe wood from different parts of Kāmarūpa. Of these, the two best varieties, black in colour, were *Joṅgaka* and *Doṅgaka*: (*tadubhayaṁ Kāmarūpajaṁ*).[147] The place names *Joṅga* and *Doṅga* appear to be Boḍo in origin,[148] indicating that most of these were from the hilly regions, inhabited by tribes who greatly exploited the forest products. *Pārasāmudrika* was another variety of the same wood, which scented like cascus or a jasmine flower, having a variegated colour, and according to Bhaṭṭasvāmī's Commentary on the *Arthaśāstra*, this was also from Kāmarūpa.[149] *Kālāgaru* finds mention in the Tezpur grant,[150] and the Nowgong grant (v. 5). Kālidāsa mentions that when *Raghu* crossed the *Lauhitya*, the lord of Prāgjyotiṣa trembled in fear along with the black aloe woods, which were used as posts for tying elephants.[151] The *Rājataraṅgiṇī*, describing Lalitāditya's exploits, writes that the invader saw in Prāgjyotiṣa "the smoke of incense rise only from the qualities of the black aloes burning in the forests."[152] The evidence from the *Harṣacarita* is far more illuminating. Bhāskara sent to Harṣa bundles consisting of black aloe, dark as pounded collyrium; black aloe oil in thick bamboo tubes, and *kakkola* sprays.[153]

The musk of deer (*kasturikā mṛgānāṁ*) and of oxen were other valuable scented animal products of Assam. We have classical evidence of musk

143. See Trivedi, *I.C.*, I, pp. 258-61; N.L. Dey, *Geographical Dictionary*, p. 215; N.N. Dasgupta, *J.A.R.S.*, VII, 24-28; *Arthaśāstra* (S.S. tr.), p. 79 (f.n.).
144. K.L. Barua, *J.A.R.S.*, VII, pp. 29f.
145. See Moti Chand, *J.I.O.S.A.*, VIII, p. 85 (f.n. 1).
146. *H.C.* (Cowell), pp. 212f.
147. *J.B.O.R.S.*, 1925, p. 36.
148. K.L. Barua, *J.A.R.S.*, VII, pp. 29f.
149. *Arthaśāstra* (S.S. tr.), p. 79 (f.n.), *J.B.O.R.S.*, 1925, pp. 36-38.
150. *J.A.S.B.*, IX, II, pp. 766f.
151. *Raghuvaṁśa*, IV, V 81.
152. *Rājataraṅgiṇī*, IV, 171.
153. *H.C.* (Cowell), pp. 212f.

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in Assam.[154] The former finds mention in the inscription of Vanamāla and Balavarman (v. 5). Bāṇa mentions among the presents from Bhāskara to Harṣa "scented bags of musk oxen" and "musk deer scenting the space all round them with their perfume."[155] The preparation of different perfumes and their use are given in the *Kālikā Purāṇa*, which mentions *cūrṇikṛta* (powder), *ghṛṣṭa* (like sandal paste), *dāhakarṣita* (ashes), *sammardajarasa* (juice) like that of aloe oil, and *prāṇyaṅgodbhava* (like musk).[156] The actual use of perfumes by women is testified by the Tezpur grant of Vanamāla (v. 30). The *Arthaśāstra* gives an exhaustive list of prefumes under the name of *tailaparṇika*. Of these, the varieties like *Joṅgaka*, *Grāmeruka*, *Suvaraṇkuḍyaka*, *Pāra-Lauhityaka*, *Paurṇadvīpaka* (from *Pūrṇadvīpa*), *Āntarvātya* and *Kālayeka* were all from Kāmarūpa.[157] That *Antarvātya* was in Kāmarūpa, is proved by the expression : (*Antarvātyāṁ Kāmarūpeṣu eva Antarvātyākhya nadī-tira jātaṁ*).[158] *Pāralauhitya*, according to the Commentary, was a place on the south bank of the Brahmaputra;[159] *Joṅgaka* was reddish-yellow in colour and smelt like a blue lotus flower or the urine of a cow. *Grāmeruka* smelt like cow's urine; *Suvarṇakuḍyaka* was reddish-yellow, having the flavour of a *mātuluṅga* (fruit of a citron tree or sweet lime); *Pūrṇadvīpaka* smelt like butter or lotus flower; *Pāralauhityaka* was like a nutmeg in colour; *Āntarvātyaka* was of the colour of cascus and *Kālayeka* was greasy and yellow. The list indicates that Kāmarūpa was noted as early as the period of the *Arthaśāstra* for the manufacture of the varieties of perfumes, and the tradition was kept alive throughout the period.

(iv) *Minor crafts* : Both literature and epigraphy point to the existence of other minor crafts like leather work, stone work, brick work, pottery, cane and bamboo work, etc. The manufacture of woollen and leather goods is proved by the *Kālikā Purāṇa* (68/12; 69/2) which mentions *kambala* (woollen cloths) among the textile materials. Bhāskara is said to have given a cap of fur or skin to Yuan Chwang as a present for protection against rain in his return journey to China.[160] The development of the industry is shown by Bāṇa who states that Bhāskara sent to Harṣa

154. *J.A.S.B.*, 1847, I, 47f, 68f.
155. *H.C.* (Cowell), pp. 212f.
156. *Chap.* 69, VV 37-55.
157. Bhaṭṭasvāmī, Commentary, *J.B.O.R.S.*, 1925, p. 40; *Śrīmūla Commentary*, pp. 189-90; H.V. Trivedi. *I.C.*, I, pp. 258-61; N.L. Dey, *Geographical Dictionary*, p. 215; N.N. Dasgupta, *J.A.R.S.*, VII, pp. 28f; *I.C.*, V, pp. 339-41; J.C. Roy *J.B.O.R.S.*. III, pp. 193f, 211-35.
158. *Arthaśāstra* Bk. II, XI, 78; *Ibid* (S.S. tr.), p. 80 (f.n.).
159. N.N. Dasgupta, *J.A.R.S.*, VII, pp. 24f; K. L. Barua, *Ibid.*, pp. 29-34.
160. *Life of Yuan Chwang*, p. 189.

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"loads of *kardaraṅga* leather bucklers with charming borders, bright gold leaf work winding about them" and "pillows of *samūruka* leather."[161] An earlier reference to buffalo and rhinoceros' hide as export commodities from Assam is made by Classical writers like Ammianus Marcellinus and Pliny.[162] The grant of Vallabhadeva refers to sandals with hide straps.[163]

The extensive remains of temples and buildings give ample evidence of working on stone and brick. This is proved also by a number of epigraphs.[164] The art of brick making is mentioned in the Śuālkuchi grant of Ratnapāla.[165] It was highly developed at a subsequent time, particularly during the Āhom period.

The art of making pottery was known from very early times. The Nidhanpur grant mentions *kumbhakāragarta* (potter's pit), and the Kamauli grant refers to the *kumbhakāras*, who were professional pottery makers. Some of the best specimens of pottery, with artistic and decorative designs belonging to the 5th-6th century A.D., have been discovered from Dah Parvatīā; some specimens have also been found in Tezpur and near Sadiyā. The clay seals of Bhāskaravarman also point to the fact that the art of clay modelling was developed. Moreover, Bāṇa mentions among the presents of Bhāskara "drinking vessels embossed by skilful artists," molasses in earthen pots and "cups of ullaka diffusing a fragrance of sweet wine."[166]

Mat-making was another allied art. Early literature refers to the well-decorated and coloured *śītal pāṭīs* (cool mats) used by the rich people. Mats were usually made of cane. The abundance of cane in the forests of Assam is testified by the classical writers. Ptolemy, for instance, states that to the east of Serica, which we have identified with Assam, there were hills and marshes where canes were grown and used as bridges.[167] Evidence of the production of other cane articles is also supplied by the *Harṣacarita*, which mentions stools of cane.[168] The cultivation of bamboo and its use for various purposes are well-known. Bāṇa again testifies

161. *H.C.* (Cowell), pp. 212f.
162. See *J.A.S.B.*, 1847, pp. 68f.
163. *E.I.*, V, pp. 181f.
164. Nowgong grant, V 14; Tezpur grant, V 24; Gauhati grant, V 10, etc.
165. *J.A.S.B.*, LXVII, I, pp. 110f; Śuālkuchi grant, (line 59). The reference here is to brick-field (*iṣṭakakendra*)
166. *H.C.* (Cowell), pp. 212f.
167. Taylor, *J.A.S.B.*, 1847, I, pp. 52f.
168. *H.C.* (Cowell), pp. 212f.

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to this highly developed craft. He states that Bhāskara sent to Harṣa "baskets of variously coloured reeds," "thick bamboo tubes" and various birds in 'bamboo cages.'[169] All these prove that varied industrial arts were developed in Assam at an early period and were continued to be practised till recent times, based on that traditions, like those of the craftsmen of other parts of India, who showed equal skill whether in the making of clay toys or in the preparation of costly perfumes.[170] It is important to note that most tribes have been expert in these allied arts.

4. Commercial Enterprises :

(i) *Merchants, transport and trade routes* : The economic resources of Kāmarūpa and her various agricultural and industrial products naturally led to the growth of both internal and external commerce. The country possibly exported more commodities than those imported from outside. Inscriptions refer to streets and good road connections between towns;[171] both land and water connections with other lands are supported by literature. The situation of the towns like Prāgjyotiṣa, Hārūppeśvara, Kāmarūpanagara and Durjayā on the bank of the Brahmaputra greatly facilitated commercial intercourse. In fact, the network of the river system of Assam played a conspicuous part in contributing to the growth of all commercial enterprises both within the State and with other lands.[172] Merchants and wealthy people lived in the towns[173] and moved in the streets on elephants and horses or carried in litters.[174] Inscriptions mention towns and markets with *vipaṇis* (shops) and various kinds of wares and jewellery. The shops of the goldsmiths contained varieties of beautiful articles. There were jewels and pearls, bracelets and rings flashing with precious stones.[175] Roads ran throughout the country and, therefore, commercial traffic in the towns was heavy and noisy. The business centres attracted many people from outside and facilitated trading enterprises.

For internal trade, both animals and boats were used, besides human carriers. Inscriptions make numerous references to elephants, horses,

169. *Ibid.*
170. See Birdwood, *Industrial Arts of India*, pp. 131-32; Weber, *History of Indian Literature*, p. 175; Wilson, *Daśakumāracarita*, p. 140.
171. Tezpur grant, V 30; Bargāon grant, V 14; Puṣpabhadrā grant, V 13.
172. See Hamilton, *Geographical, Statistical and Historical Description, etc.*, II, p. 741; Thomson, *Assam Valley*, etc., p. 45; Wade, *Geographical Sketch of Assam*, p. 14; W. Hamilton, *East India Gazetteer*, p. 42
173. Bargāon grant, lines 31-33; Gauhāti grant, (second plate).
174. Tezpur grant, V 30.
175. Bargāon grant, V 14 and lines 38-39.

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buffaloes, cattle, and boats in the Brahmaputra. The Tezpur Rock inscription of Harjjara indicates that the royal boats were numerous and even in so wide a river as the Brahmaputra, regulation of boat traffic was found necessary to prevent collisions between royal boats and those of fishermen.[176] Inscriptions also mention bullock carts (*śakaṭa*) and carriages drawn by elephants and horses carrying merchants and well-to-do people in the streets and market places. These conveyances served also the purpose of external trade.

Communications were by mountain passes, land and water routes. This, as we shall show, is testified by the classical writers beginning with the first century A.D., if not earlier. Water communications were not only by the Brahmaputra, its tributaries, and the Ganges, but also through the upper courses of the Irrawaddy, Mekong, Menam, Chindwin and other rivers of Burma. Since the time of the intrusion of the oceanic elements into Assam through Burma, both the land and the sea routes remained open. Trading by sea was carried on by a class of people, called *Vaṇiks* (merchants).[177] Yuan Chwang states that the rulers of Kāmarūpa had the sea route to China under their protection.[178] The existence of a sea route to China is also evidenced by the question put by Bhāskara to Yuan Chwang regarding his route of return to his place of nativity. "But I know not," said Bhāskara, "if you prefer to go, by what route you propose to return; if you select the southern sea route, then I will send some officials to accompany you."[179] Some of the aphorisms of *Dāka* refer to commerce by sea on the coast of Arakan. He also refers to a profitable trade with the people of *Laṅkā* or *Kāmalaṅkā* of Yuan Chwang, lying on the south-east of Samataṭa or the coast of Burma. "Perhaps traders from Champā, Kāmarūpa and Vaṅga visited this coast for the purposes of trade." It was quite possible from early times, as the *Lauhitya sāgara*, as evidenced by the classical and Indian sources, joined the Bay of Bengal. The merchants from Kāmarūpa, therefore, "carried their merchandise in large boats down the Brahmaputra and reached the sea after skirting round the Gāro Hills. They crossed the sea and traded in sea-ports like Tāmralipti."[180]

176. *J.B.O.R.S.*, 1917, pp. 508f.

177. The art of navigating the sea goes back to a remote period in India. (Bühler, *Origin of the Brāhmī Alphabets*, p. 84; S.K. Das, *Economic History, etc.*, pp. 29f); see also Frazer, *Lit. Hist. of India*, p. 29; Keith, *Camb. Hist. of India*, I, 101 and others for a different view.

178. *Life of Yuan Chwang*, Intro., XXVI.

179. *Ibid.*, p. 188.

180. *E.H.K.*, p. 188-89, 319.

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The cultural and commercial contact between ancient Assam and China both by land and sea routes is shown by a number of sources, which support our contention that both the lands contained some elements of common culture, as China supplied some earlier racial elements that contributed to the development of the Indo-Chinese culture in Assam. The earliest reference to commercial relations between India and China through the Assam-Burma routes is found in the accounts of *Chang Kien* (200 B.C.). We have discussed this question in another place.[181] The two Indian Buddhist missionaries who visited China (1st C.A.D.) passed probably through the upper valley of the Irrawaddy and Yunnan. IT-sing refers to twenty Chinese priests as having come to India from Szuchuan through Upper Burma in the 3rd or 4th century A.D. In the 10th century A.D., 300 missionaries from China to India returned by way of Yunnan.[182]

The reference in the *Shung Shu* (A.D. 420-79) that a king of the Kapili valley in Assam sent an embassy to China,[183] probably through this Assam-Burma route, also indicates the early political and commercial contact between Assam and China. This was strengthened during the 7th century A.D. during the time of the visit of Yuan Chwang to the court of Bhāskara. We have already referred to the sea routes to China, which were under the control of the Kāmarūpa rulers. The existence of a land route and the intimate relation between the two lands are revealed both by the accounts of the pilgrim and their conversations. Yuan Chwang writes thus: "To the east of Kāmarūpa, the country was a series of hills and hillocks without any principal city and it reached the south-west barbarians (of China), because the inhabitants were akin to the Man and the Lao. The pilgrim learned from the people (of Kāmarūpa) that the south-west borders of Szuchuan were distant about two months' journey."[184] When the pilgrim was in Kāmarūpa, Bhāskara told him of his (Bhāskara's) interest and intimate knowledge of China. "Now through the kingdoms of India," said the king, "there are many persons who sing about the victories of the T'sin king of the Mahācina country; I have long heard of this. And is it true that this is your honourable birth-place?—I have ever had an esteem towards the east, but the intervening mountains and rivers have prevented me from personally visiting it."[185] The song referred to relates to the victory of T'sin, the second son of the T'ang Emperor Kaotsu, over the

181. See Chaps. III & IV.
182. Majumdar, *Hindu Colonies in the Far-East*, pp. 226-27.
183. Gerini, *J.R.A.S.*, 1910, pp. 1187f.
184. Watters, II, pp. 185f; Beal II, pp. 195f.
185. Beal, *Ibid.*, pp. 197f; Watters, I, p. 348.

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rebels in A.D. 619. Even after this Bhāskara retained close contact with China. When the envoys of the T'ang dynasty, Li Yi Piao and Wang Hiuan tse (A.D. 643-46) came to India, Bhāskara asked the former to send a Sanskrit translation of Tao-toh-king and the latter for a portrait of Lao tse. The work was translated with the help of Yuan Chwang and some Taoist teachers and sent to Bhāskara.[186] Unfortunately we have no trace of the work, which if recovered, "will be a document of inestimable value in the world of Chino-Indian contacts—a permanent memento of India's genuine desire to know China, however limited that desire might have been."[187] All these records point to the conclusion that Assam had intimate cultural contact and commercial relations with China, both by land and sea routes long before the time of Bhāskara in the 7th century A.D.

A detailed description of the Assam-Burma routes to China is given in *Kia tan* (8th century A.D.). It describes the route from Tonkin in Southern China through Yunnansen, Yunnan-fou and Talifou; going westwards it crossed the Salween at Youngchang, on the west of that river, and then led to Chou-ko-leang to the east of Momein between Shiveli and the Salween. It branched off there, the main route leading through the valley of the Shiveli and joining the Irrawaddy on the south-west; the second route led to the west. From Chou-ko-leang, the main route reached Si-li, halfway between Ta-gaung and Mandalay; it passed by Toumin (Pagan) and reached Prome and leading through the mountain of Arakan in the west, it reached Kāmarūpa. The minor route from Chou-ko-leang led westwards to Teng Ch'ong (Momein) and crossing the mountains, reached Li-Shouei on the Irrawaddy near Bhamo; then crossing the river Magaung, it led through the town of Nagansi through the mountains and then reached Kāmarūpa.[188]

At a subsequent time numerous other routes were opened into China through Burma, Bhutan and Tibet, and not only the people from the plains but also the hill tribes, the Ābars, Dafalās and the Mishmis in particular, were responsible for these early commercial contacts. These trading routes confirm our belief that ancient Assam had regular commercial transactions with China and the Far East through Burma, Maṇipur, Pātkāi and other passes of Assam in the north and the south-east.

That there were numerous mountain passes in the north of Assam leading to China, Afghanistan and the west through Bhutan and Tibet,

186. *Pre-Aryan and Pre-Dravidian in India*, pp. 114-115; P.C. Bagchi, *India and China*, pp. 200f.
187. S.K. Chatterji, *The National Flag and Other Essays*, p. 19.
188. See Bagchi, *India and China*, pp. 18f.

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is testified by a number of sources. The *Tabaqāt-i-Nāsiri* writes that there were as many as thirty-five passes between Assam and Tibet and through them horses were brought to Lakhnauti. It was perhaps through these passes in the north and the north-east of Assam that some of the racial elements, such as the Alpines, entered the country. Rutherford states that the Lhasa traders had continuous commercial relations with Assam in the past. The merchants from Lhasa went to China and brought back various goods for sale to the Assam traders.[189] This is pointed out by the *Periplus* as early as the first century A.D. It states that from Thina or Assam, articles, like raw and manufactured silk were brought by land through Bactria to Barygaza or else down the Ganges and then by sea to Limurika on the coast of Malabar. The work refers, therefore, to both land and water routes and points to trading relations with places like Afghanistan. The first of these routes was via Tibet or Bhutan. The Tibetans, we know, carried on a considerable traffic with Assam. A caravan consisting of about 20 persons went annually to the frontier of Assam and took up their quarters at a place called Chouna, while the Assamese merchants were stationed at Geganshur. This was one route through which the goods of Assam reached Bactria as well.[190] Another route was through the mountain passes of Bhutan. This is confirmed also by a later writer, Tavernier, who mentions that merchants travelled through Bhutan to Kabul to avoid paying duty that was levied on merchandise passing into India via Gorakhpur.[191] He describes a journey extending over deserts and mountains as far as Kabul where the caravans parted, some for Great Tartary, and others for Balkh, and at the latter place merchants of Bhutan bartered their goods. The accounts given in the *Periplus* would, therefore, yield that merchandise brought from Assam to Balkh or Bactria was purchased there by merchants, who were on their way to India, and who afterwards sailed down the Indus to Barygaza or Gujarāṭ, where they took ship for the Red Sea. The other route by water down the Ganges and then by sea to Limurika no doubt refers to the route by the Brahmaputra and the Ganges. Merchandise from Assam was brought by this route to the Gangetic mart near Dacca and was then shipped to Limurika.[192] The journey of the caravan from Byzantium to the frontier of Serica or Assam, as described by Ptolemy, seems to be identical with the description in the *Periplus* of the route from Bactria to Assam or with the route from Bhutan to Kabul and then to Balkh.[193] It appears

189. See Pemberton, *Report on Bootan*, p. 144; Hamilton, II, pp. 743f.
190. See Taylor, *J.A.S.B.*, 1847, I, pp. 31-32.
191. *Travels*, II, pp. 259f.
192. See Taylor, *J.A.S.B.*, 1847, I, pp. 31-32
193. *Ibid.*, pp. 50f.

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that the merchants who traded with the people of Assam were not allowed to enter the latter country, but they carried on traffic with them at a pass between Bhutan and Assam. Ptolemy (i, xvii) mentions another route to Assam via Palibothra (Pāṭaliputra). This was through the Brahmaputra to Assam, which was the route by the Ganges mentioned in the *Periplus*, by which merchandise was exported to Limurika by sea.

Assam's cultural and commercial relations with the rest of India have been far closer. Besides the contact between Kāmarūpa and Videha, relations with Gujarāṭ and Kāśmrīa from early times have been proved by the Epics, the *Purāṇas* and the *Rājataraṅgiṇī*. We have already referred to the route from Assam through the Brahmaputra and the Ganges to Bengal, Magadha and the west, as mentioned by the *Periplus* and Ptolemy. This is also referred to by Ctesias and Aelian, who mention a profitable trade in lac and amber from the *siptachora* tree grown in the hills of Assam. Wilford, on the basis of these writers, points out that these people where *siptachora* was found, traded with the rest of India, carrying the dried fruit of the tree, along with the amber and the purple dye prepared from the lac in boats. They are also said to have carried a great quantity to the then king of Magadha to the amount of one hundred talents, and in return they took bread, coarse cloth and other articles.[194] Schoff, on the basis of the *Periplus*, rightly points out that gold from the rivers of Assam and Burma was brought to India through Tripurā.[195] This is confirmed by the later traveller Tavernier who wrote that both gold and silk were not only sent overland to China, but also that the Tripurā merchants had trading relations with the Deccan.[196] Assam's commercial realtions even with Ceylon are indicated by another classical source. In speaking of an embassy from Ceylon to the Roman emperor Claudius, Pliny (vi, xvii-xxii) represents the ambassador as stating that the people of Ceylon knew the Seres, people of Assam through the medium of trade and that the ambassadors' father often visited them.[197]

The most intimate contact, as we have stated, was with Magadha. The earliest mention of the trade routes between Kāmarūpa and Magadha is found in the *Arthaśāstra*. The extension of the frontiers of Kāmarūpa to North Bengal, Kaliṅga, Kośala and Magadha at a subsequent time, and the close cultural contact between Kāmarūpa and these regions, including Nepal, led to the development of regular trade route. The

194. *A. Res.*, IX, p. 65.
195. *The Periplus*, pp. 47-48, 258-59.
196. *Travels*, II, pp. 281f; also Ball, *Economic Geology of India*, III, p. 231.
197. *J.A.S.B.*, 1847, I, pp. 43f.

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route to Magadha was not only by water, as evidenced by the classical sources, but also by land. The association of Bhāskara with Yuan Chwang and Harṣa during the 7th century A.D. reveals something about these routes. Communications were regular and easy. Haṁsavega, the Kāmarūpa ambassador, met Harṣa on the bank of the river *Sarasvatī*, not far from Sthāneśvara, after a month's journey.[198] Another messenger from Bhāskara reached *Nālandā* within a short time.[199] Similarly a messenger despatched by Harṣa, when he was in *Koṅgoda* (Gangam), reached Kāmarūpa after a few days' journey.[200] Thus there was a regular exchange of envoys from one part of the country to another, probably by the land route. The exact line of communication we find from the route of Yuan Chwang. When he started for Kāmarūpa from Magadha, he came through *Campā*, *Kājaṅgala* (*Rājmahal*) and *Puṇḍravardhana*, and then, crossing a large river, which was evidently the *Karatoyā*, the pilgrim entered Kāmarūpa.[201] The importance of the water route is also revealed by the accounts. Bhāskara with the pilgrim went with his followers up the Ganges and met Harṣa near *Kājaṅgala*.[202] The evidence shows that the kingdom had a continuous diplomatic and trading relation with the west both by land and water routes, not only during the 7th century A.D., but also before and after. The conquest of *Gauḍa*, *Kośala*, *Kaliṅga* and other lands during the 8th century A.D. by Harṣadeva seems to indicate that there were good road and water communications for the march of armies. The constant migration of Brāhmaṇas and other people to and from Kāmarūpa, as shown by records, also points to the same concluson.

(ii) *Articles of trade* : One of the chief articles of trade was silk, both raw and manufactured, which was exported to other lands. This is testified by the *Periplus* which, as we have mentioned, records that from Thina (Assam)[203] both raw and manufactured silk were brought by land through Bactria to Barygaza or else down the Ganges and then by sea to Limurika or the coast of Malabar.[204] Pliny also mentions that the silk trade was carried on in and through Assam.[205] The same reference is found in Ammianus Marcellinus (xxii, vi). Another valuable article

198. *H.C.* (Cowell), pp. 212f.
199. *Life of Yuan Chwang*, pp. 165f; Watters, I, p. 348.
200. *Ibid.*
201. Beal, II, pp. 195f; Watters, II, pp. 185f.
202. *Life of Yuan Chwang*, pp. 165f; Watters, I, p. 348.
203. Taylor, *J.A.S.B.*, 1847, I, pp. 29f.
204. Vincent, *Periplus*, II, pp. 523f; McCrindle, *The Commerce and Navigation etc.*, pp. 145f; J.L. Whiteley, *The Periplus*, pp. 134f.
205. Schoff, *Periplus*, p. 267.

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of export was *tejpāt*, the malabothrum of the *Periplus* and other classical writers. The *Periplus* gives an interesting story of the Sesatae in connection with the marketing of this article.[206] This refers to the description of a trading in malabothrum of the people of Assam.[207] The evidence for the export of gold is pointed out by Schoff, on the basis of the *Periplus*, and we have already stated that gold was brought to India from the rivers of Assam and Burma.[208] This is confirmed by Tavernier, who points out that both silk and gold were sent overland to China, and the merchants of Tripurā, trading in the Deccan, took back valuable commodities.[209]

The marketing habits of the Sesatae of Assam of the *Periplus* are described in other Classical works. Pomponius Mela, for instance, (iii, vii) describing the country of the Seres (Assam) writes that they were noted for their trade. They used to leave their merchandise and retire till the merchants they dealt with had left a price or bartered for the amount, which, upon their departure, the people of Seres returned and collected. Similar reference is found in Pliny (vi, xvii-xxii) who refers to the marketing habits of the people of the country of the Seres or Assam.[210]

The other articles of merchandise, mentioned in the Classical works, are lac, buffalo and rhinoceros' hide and horns, iron, aloe, musk, cloth, etc. Ammianus Marcellinus mentions these commodities from the country of the Seres, which were exported to other parts of India. Pliny also mentions that they exported skin, iron and cloth. The iron of Serica (Assam)[211] is considered to be the best in India (xxxiii, xiv). We have already mentioned the export of lac and amber of the *siptachora* tree, on the basis of Ctesias and Aelian, and the people exchanged them for bread, coarse cloth, etc. They sold also their swords, bows and arrows. The reference is to the marketing habits of some hill people of Assam. Ctesias further mentions, with reference to the country of *siptachora*, that it produced all good things, which according to Taylor, refer to silk, lac and other dyes, including musk, ivory, gold, silver and iron, which were exported to India, via the Brahmaputra.[212] The export of lac to China and Japan is mentioned also by Tavernier.[213] The export of iron, hide, buffalo horns, pearls, including lac and silk to China through Bhutan and

206. Vincent, II, pp. 523f; McCrindle, pp. 145f; Whiteley, pp. 134f.
207. *J.A.S.B.*, 1847, I, pp. 32-33.
208. *Periplus* pp. 47-48, 258-59.
209. *Travels*, II, pp. 275, 281.
210. *J.A.S.B.*, 1847, I, pp. 43f.
211. *Ibid.*, pp. 68f, 73.
212. Heeren, *Asiatic Nations*, II, IV (App.), p. 380; *J.A.S.B.*, 1847, I, 47.
213. *Travels*, II, p. 282.

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Tibet was also common. We have already stated that the Lhasa merchants had regular trading relations with Assam in between their passes. The merchants from Lhasa used to go to China and brought back silver bullion and rock salt which they exchanged with the Assam traders for rice, silk, lac, hide, buffalo horns, pearls and other commodities.[214] All these accounts prove that the country exported many valuable articles to other lands and had important commercial enterprises from early times.

(iii) *Medium of exchange—Weights and Measures* : It is not known when coins were for the first time used as a medium of exchange in Assam. In early times, when the value of an article was measured in terms of commodities, all business transactions were no doubt carried on by a system of barter, and, as in other parts of India, as shown by early literature, animals, like cattle, animal skins, garments, rice, cowries, etc., were used for barter. The evidence of trading relations that we have just described, points to the fact that barter was the only medium of exchange. It is worth noting that even now most of the tribes use articles like animal heads, mithans, daos, arrows and spear heads, gongs, bells, etc., in purchasing things The people of the plains also were accustomed to carry on their commercial transactions with the help of barter even long after the circulation of coins. Unfortunately, not a single Assamese coin of our period has been discovered.

The earliest reference to the use of cowries is found in the *Harṣacarita;* Bāṇa states that Bhāskara sent to Harṣa "heaps of black and white cowries" as presents.[215] The use of cowries is further proved by the Tezpur Rock inscription of Harjjara.[216] The earliest reference to a silver coin probably from Kāmarūpa is noticed in the *Arthaśāstra* which mentions it under the name of *Gaulikaṁ*.[217] The gold coin '*kaltis*', mentioned in the *Periplus*,[218] which, in the opinion of Benfey, is associated with the word *Kalitā*,[219] has probably a connection with the Kalitās of Assam, who as rulers may have minted coins. A definite reference to gold coins is found in the Śilimpur grant of the twelfth century A.D., which referring to a *tulāpuruṣa* gift from the Kāmarūpa king Jayapāla, states that the Brāhmaṇa Prahāsa did not accept the offer of 900 gold coins.[220] The

214. Pemberton, *Report on Bootan*, p. 144, Hamilton, II, pp. 743f.
215. *H.C.* (Cowell), pp. 212f.
216. *J.B.O.R.S.*, 1917, pp. 508f.
217. *J.B.O.R.S.*, 1926, p. 63; *Ibid.*, XI, II, p. 62; *J.A.R.S.*, VII, pp. 29-34.
218. Schoff, *Periplus*, pp. 47-48.
219. McCrindle, *The Commerce and Navigation*, etc., p. 31; Schoff, pp. 258f.
220. *E.I.*, XII, pp. 289f.

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same grant states that the Brāhmaṇa refused to accept a gift of land yielding an income of 1,000 coins. There is besides other evidence to show that the people worked in metal. These prove that both cowries and coins were used as a medium of exchange side by side with the exchange of articles for articles.

The evidence about the use of weights and measures is lacking. L.D. Barnett rightly points out, however, "that different ages and provinces followed different standards".[221] It is not known what exactly was the the standard of weight of the coins, referred to in ancient Assam. The words *droṇa* and *pāṭaka* occur in the Śilimpur grant in connection with land-grants. On the basis of Gupta inscriptions, *pāṭaka* is taken to be equal to forty *droṇas*.[222] As occurring in the *Arthaśāstra*, the weight of a *droṅa* is taken to be about 21 lbs.[223] *Droṇa* or *doṇa* is used now in Assam as measuring five seers of any article; but when applied to a plot of land, it stands for about a *bighā* of land. Both *pāṭaka* and *droṇa* might have been used in the sense of a particular area of land as well as for weights and measures, and were used in the exchange of commodities through barter. The reference in the Śilimpur grant to a *tulāpuruṣa* gift of 900 gold coins (i.e., equal to the weight of the body), suggests that the weight of a gold coin was equal to about five tolās, taking the average weight of a body as about 120 lbs.

221. *Antiquities of India*, p. 236.
222. D.C. Sircar, *Select Inscriptions*, I, pp. 331f.
223. Pran Nath, *Economic Condition*, etc., pp. 72f.

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SECTION 3

LITERATURE AND EDUCATION

1. Introduction of script and the art of writing :

Not to speak of the Assamese script, which is definitely of later development, the question of the evolution of the Indian alphabets and the art of writing is still disputed.[1] But, the weight of evidence proves the Indian origin of the alphabets.[2] It is also believed that *Brāhmī* is the parent of the Indian scripts.[3] We cannot, however, conclude whether the *Brāhmī* or any other script had its origin in the prehistoric pictographs,[4] till these are completely deciphered.[5] But it is certain that from the period of the Vedas onwards both the script and the art of writing were developed.[6]

It is likely that the Assamese script was derived from the *Brāhmī* and *Devanāgarī* through successive stages until it reached its final form. It was probably a 'descendant of the *Kuṭila* variation of the Gupta script of Eastern India'.[7] An examination of the script of the epigraphs, written mostly in *Brāhmī* and in Devanāgarī shows the trend of its evolution on independent lines. In any case, the earliest known script of Assam was *Devanāgarī*, rather North Indian *Brāhmī*, and the art of writing in Assam was known as early as the 6th century A.D., if not earlier, as proved by the grants of Bhūtivarman. Beginning with a gradual change in the *Kāmarūpī* dialect, which according to Yuan Chwang differed only a little from that of Mid India,[8] the process of evolution of both the script and the language continued until it had an individualised and independent

1. See Bühler, *Indian Palaeography*, pp. 2, 8-9; Barnett, *Antiquities of India*, pp. 225f; Keay, *Indian Education in Ancient and Later Times*, p. 33; Rhys Davids, *Buddhist India*, pp. 107f.
2. See J. Dowson, *J.R.A.S.*, XIII, pp. 102f.
3. Bühler, pp. 2f.
4. P. Mitra, *I.A.*, 1919, pp. 57-64; *P.A.S.B.*, XVII (N.S.), pp. 279-85; Bhandarkar, *C.R.*, 1920, pp. 22-39; *P. Ist. O. Conf.* II, 1922, pp. 305-18; Majumdar, *J.P.A.S.B.*, 1921, pp. 231f; *J.B.O.R.S.*, IX, pp. 419-20.
5. H.C. Dasgupta, *J.P.A.S.B.*, 1921, pp. 210-12; R.P. Chanda, *J.B.O.R.S.*, IX, pp. 262-65; also B. Svarup, *J.B.O.R.S.*, VIII, pp. 46-64, 99-109; *Ibid.*, IX, pp. 347f.
6. H.C. Dasgupta, *J.D.L.*, X, pp. 173-88; G.S. Ojāh, *Prācīnlipimālā*, pp. 1-16.
7. S. Kataki, *Ancient Assamese Script*, p. 8.
8. Watters, *Yuan Chwang*, II, 185f.

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script of its own. It may be noted that in most inscriptions of the period under review composed in *Devanāgarī*, rather North Indian *Brāhmī* and in Sanskrit language, not only do we notice Assamese *akṣaras* but also words and expressions which are found in modern Assamese almost in their present forms. In the Kāṇāivarasī Rock inscription at North Gauhati, dated *śaka* 1127, we find specimens of a few Assamese characters. It is evident, therefore, that Assamese alphabets had taken more or less their present forms beginning at least with the 12th century A.D. In the Buddhist *dohās*, composed by the Tāntrik-Buddhist *siddhas*, most of whom were from Assam, may be found the earliest specimens of both the Kāmarūpī script and the language which at one time constituted the parent speech of eastern India, including no doubt North Bengal, Mithila, Videha, Orissa, Nepal and Tibet. It is of interest to note that the modern Tibetan characters bear close similarities to the Assamese, which is possible because of their common origin. It is pertinent to observe that while the epigraphs of the period are found composed in North Indian *Brāhmī* and *Devanāgarī* scripts and Sanskrit language, not a single old manuscript is found written in *Devanāgarī*, though the language used, is Sanskrit. The early evolution of the Assamese script perhaps explains for its universal use in producing both the Sanskrit and Assamese manuscripts. The *akṣaras* of the early inscriptions, of particularly the Kāṇāivarasī inscription, as has been pointed out, present a clue to the gradual transition from *Brāhmī* and *Devanāgarī* to the early Assamese script, or more appropriately the Kāmarūpī, which was marked subsequently by four schools, and which in process of time merged into one another producing more or less a common script. Many *akṣaras* of the old manuscripts tend to be almost similar with those of *Devanāgarī* of a mixed form, and the older the manuscripts are, the more marked are the similarities.[8a] This is substantiated by existing Sanskrit and Assamese works. Even after the evolution, the parallel development and the use of both the languages may have continued throughout the ancient period. Evidence of the existence of anything like Mon-Khmer Khāsi and Mongolian scripts is lacking, nor is it known when and how their dialects were differentiated. The Mon-Khmer speech had perhaps an earlier growth, though no written literature of the period has come down to us. The substratum of both the Mon-Khmer and Tibeto-Burman speech in the Assamese vocabulary points definitely to the early evolution of their dialects; but for want of written specimens, our treatment of the subject will be confined to the Assamese language and the evolution of Assamese literature alone.

8a. P.C. Choudhury, *A Cat. of Sanskrit Manuscripts at the D.H.A.S., Preface; Education in Ancient Assam and the Royal Patronage, Cotton College Diamond Jubilee Volume*, pp. 119-27.

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2. Evolution of Assamese language and literature of the period :

Though the script was derived from the North Indian *Brāhmī* and *Devanāgarī* and though the language itself belongs to a branch of the Neo-Indo-Aryan languages, or rather the outer band of the Indo-Aryan groups, with a definite admixture of the *Dārdic* speech of the Alpines,[9] its vocabulary is not entirely based on the Sanskrit. The epigraphs, though written in Sanskrit, prove that as early as the 7th century A.D. and later, some of the Assamese formations, as has already been noted, are found even in their present forms and used in the same sense. To cite a few instances, the name of a man '*Kāliā*', used at present in the same form, occurs in the Nidhanpur grant; '*Ḍumbarī*' of the same grant is used now as *Ḍamaru; 'Nākka*' (nose) of the Tezpur Rock inscription of Harjjara, in modern Assamese *nāka*; '*Kūā*' (well) of the Tezpur grant of Vanamāla, now used as *Kūā*; '*Āli*' (dam in rice field) of the Nowgong grant, is used in the same form and sense in modern Assamese; '*Joli*' (a small stream) of the Guākuchi grant is used now as *Julī*; '*Jān*' (a channel) of Puṣpabhadrā grant is also so used.[10] These instances show that the Assamese language is not entirely based on the Sanskrit, and its evolution on independent lines began very early. In fact, the vernacular languages of particularly North India are derived from *apabhraṁśas*, based not on Sanskrit but on old *Prākṛts*.[10a] These "must be considered as the descendants not of grammatical Sanskrit, nor of grammatical *Prākṛt* but of the various *apabhraṁśas*, spoken in different parts of India".[11] It is evident that Assamese originated from the same group as the Bengali, Oriyā and Bihāri, derived from the eastern variety of the *Magadhān Prākṛt*.[12] It is perhaps due to this common origin and the similarity of alphabets that a claim has been made that Assamese is nothing but a dialect of Bengali.[13] But, not only in vocabularies but also in grammar and accent, the two languages have a marked difference; a few of the instances that we have quoted from our epigraph definitely point to the independent origin of

9. Grierson, *Ency. Br.* XIV, p. 488; G. Howell, *Soul of India*, p. 20.

10. See K.R. Medhi, *Assamese Grammar and the Origin of the Assamese Language*, Intro., pp. LXXIIIf.

10a. The influence of the *Prākṛt* may be seen even in the writings of the Tezpur Rock inscription of the king Harjjaravarman of the early ninth century A.D. Here though the language is Sanskrit, it contains many words in *Prākṛt:* (*Kāmarūpa Śāsanāvalī*, p. 188.)

11. Max Muller, *Lectures on the Science of Language*, I, pp. 179-80.

12. Grierson, *L.S.I.*, I, I, pp. 126; Macdonell, *India's Past*, pp. 200f; Grierson, *Indo-Aryan Vernaculars*, *B.S.O.S.*, *London*, I, 1917, pp. 72f; S.K. Chatterji, *Origin and Development of Bengali Language*, pp. 139-40.

13. D.C. Sen, *History of Bengali Language and Literature*, pp. 110f.

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both the script and language of the Assamese. It is certain that both "started on parallel lines with peculiar dialectical predispositions and often developed sharply contradictory idiosyncracies."[14] Assamese, therefore, was never "an offshoot or *patois* of Bengali, but an independent speech, related to Bengali, both occupying the position of dialects with reference to some standard *Magadhan apabhraṁśa*. Modern Assamese in certain respects shows a clear approximation to the forms and idioms preserved in the *dohās*."[15] S. K. Chatterji rightly points out that "Assamese—became an idependent speech, although her sister dialect, North Bengali occupied the vassalage of the literary speech of Bengal."[16]

This independent position of Assamese may also be attributed to the extensive literary works of the period. As Macdonell points out, the Assamese "possesses an important literature—Its literary style does not suffer like Bengal from the excessive use of Sankritisations. The literature goes back to an early date, is varied in character and especially abounds in historical works."[17] The dialect prevalent in places like Koch Bihar and Rangpur, which were under Kāmarūpa, was the old *Kāmarūpī*, and the aphorisms of *Dāka*, who was from Kāmarūpa, found its way to Bengal and even to Orissa in the past. Even to-day the speech of these parts of North Bengal bears close similarity to modern Assamese. In fine, Assamese literature is as old as the Bengali. "Like Oriyā, Assamese is a sister, not a daughter of Bengali. It comes from Bihar, through North Bengal, not through Bengal proper".[18] As Nicholl remarks, the language "is not, as many suppose a corrupt dialect of Bengali, but a distinct and coordinate tongue, having with Bengali a common source of current vocabulary. Its Sanskrit did not come to it from Bengal, but from the upper provinces of India—this, all who carefully examine the matter, will readily admit."[19] There is every reason to believe, therefore, that Assamese came direct from the West.[20]

The origin of Assamese literature, therefore, goes back to antiquity, and it is as rich as other provincial languages of India. Its "literature is as old, if not older than that of Bengali—Assamese literature is essentially

14. Kākati, *Assamese—Its Formation and Development*, pp. 7f; *Aspects of Early Assamese Literature*, 3f.
15. *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10.
16. Chatterji, p. 148.
17. *India's Past*, pp. 200f, 212.
18. Grierson, *L.S.I.*, I, I, pp. 156-57.
19. *Manual of the Bengali language including an Assamese Grammar*, etc., p. 72.
20. Kākati, *Aspect of Early Assamese Literature*, p. 3.

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a national product. It always has been national and it is so still. The genius of its people has led it along lines of its own and its glory—history—is a branch of study almost unknown to the indigenous literature of Bengal. Whether the nation has made the literature or the literature the nation, I know not," writes Grierson, "but, as a matter of fact, both have been for centuries and are in vigorous existence. Between them they have created a standard literary language, which, whether its grammar resembles that of Bengal or not, has won for itself the right to a separate, independent existence."[21] This independent character is shown by the fact that though it had its origin in the eastern variety of the *Magadhan apabhraṁśa* based on *Prākṛt*, it contains more non-Aryan words. It has also close similarities with the western group and even the Mārāthī language. It "retains some important peculiarities of the Western group to which Sindhī and Gujarāṭī also belong. Nay, it retains also a few peculiarities of the language of the Zend Avesta."[22] So Assamese "is a mixture of *Sauraseni* and *Māgadhī apabhraṁśas*"[23] or a mixture of the Eastern and Western groups of the outer band of the Indo-Aryan languages, containing many Dardic elements. To show a few instances of similarities, the Assamese word '*āi*' (mother) is the same in Mārāthī and found in dialects near Gujarāṭ; '*jon*' (moon) is the same in Kāśmirī and '*jui*' (fire) in Avestan.[24] The contributions made, however, by the non-Aryan elements to the formation of Assamese are far greater than those of the Aryans. In short, the Aryans and non-Aryans like the Austric and the Tibeto-Burmans have contributed to the richness of the Assamese vocabulary. B. K. Kākati has rightly shown the various influences of the Austric, Kolerian, Malayan, Boḍo and other elements in the formation of the Assamese vocabulary. Like the composite character of the Assamese culture, the language has also absorbed these various elements and like the Boḍo "the Austric elements seem to constitute an essential substratum of Assamese vocabulary."[25]

We may corroborate our findings by citing a few instances. The Assamese '*āpā*' (boy) has its Muṇḍārī equivalent in 'appu'; Assamese '*dādā*' (elder brother) in Santālī, 'dādā'; '*bāi*' (elder sister) in Gond, '*bāi*'; '*beli*' (sun) in Juong, '*belā*'; '*kābu*' (convenience) in Khāsi,

21. Grierson, *L.S.I.*, V, I. p. 394; also J.D. Anderson, *Assamese and Bengali*, 1896; Grierson, *Assamese Literature*, *I.A.*, XXV, pp. 57f; Nicholl, *Manual of the Bengali Language including an Assamese Grammar*, 1894.

22. Medhi, *Assamese Grammar, etc.*, Intro., pp. XXf.

23. *Ibid.*

24. D.N. Bharali, *J.A.R.S.*, VII, pp. 41-48.

25. B.K. Kākati, *Assamese—Its Formation and Development*, p. 39.

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'kābu' (good luck, opportunity); '*litikāi*' (attendant) in Khāsi, '*laitkāi*' (to wander about).[26] The Tibeto- Burman elements are more predominant than any other The Assamese '*ālahi*' (guest) in Mikir, '*ālahi arleṅg*' (guest); '*khang*' (anger) in Chutīā, *khang;* '*tekeli*' (earthen jar) in Gāro, '*tikli*'; *dalaṅg* (bridge) in Kachāri, '*dalaṅg,;* '*doṅg*' (irrigation channel) in Kachāri and Mikir, '*doṅg*'.[27] Some Assamese words have even similarities with words of other Indo-European languages. The Assamese '*ābu*' (grand-mother) has the Latin equivalent, *avia;* '*ātā*' (grand-father) in Greek, *atta;* '*āl*' (nursing) in Latin, *alo* (to nourish); '*o'r*' (end) in Latin, *ora* (border); '*jaharā*' (bastard) in Zend, *jahi* (a courtezan). All these justify our conclusion that Assamese had an independent evolution and in course of time absorbed more non-Aryan words than those of Sanskrit.

The earliest specimens of the Assamese are supplied, as has already been noted, by the Buddhist *dohās*, recovered from Nepal, and the writings of the Tāntrik-Buddhist *siddhas*, most of which were composed in old *Magadhan Apabhraṁśa*, allied to old *Kāmarūpī*, and were current in Bengal and Bihar including Tibet. The *Kṛṣṇa Kīrtana* of Baḍu Caṇḍīdāsa also presents such specimens of speech.[28] The testmony of Yuan Chwang that the speech of Kāmarūpa differed only a little from that of Mid-India can possibly be justified by the fact that Assam held very intimate cultural contact with Videha, Magadha and Mithilā. "It is not, therefore, at all strange that the language of the Buddhist *dohās*, composed in Kāmarūpa during the tenth and the eleventh centuries, should be a mixed *Maithilī-Kāmarūpī* language bearing close resemblance to modern Assamese, the direct off-spring of the old *Kāmarūpī* dialect."[29] The Buddhist *dohās*, constituting the very basis of the Kāmarūpī speech, exerted also a considerable influence on the writings of the pre-Vaiṣṇava and Vaiṣṇava writers of Assam, particularly in *Ankīā Nāṭs* and *Baragītas* of Śankaradeva and Mādhavadeva. Certain words and expressions in both bear wonderful similarities; a close study of the *dohās* confirms this conclusion and lends further support to the fact that Kāmarūpī speech originated from the said *dohās*. It was this speech again , enriched by current vocabularies, that continued to hold its own and could claim to be the lingua franca of not only Assam but also of North Bengal. Manuscripts, composed as late as the nineteenth century A. D. in Assamese show but the predominence of this Kāmarūpī speech.

26. K.R. Medhi, *Assamese Grammar etc.*, Intro., LXVII,
27. *Ibid.*, LXIIIf.
28. B.K. Kākati, (ed.), *Aspects of Early Assamese Literature*, p. 4.
29. *E.H.K.*, pp. 164, 318; see also D.N. Bharali, *J.A.R.S.*, VII, pp. 41-48.

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It may be pointed out here that ancient Assamese literature consists of much unwritten poetry, such as pastoral ballads; *Bihu* folk songs; cowherd and boat songs; incantations and *mantras*, used in magic and sorcery or to cure snake-bite and to drive away the evil influence of spirits during illness; riddles; maxims; *ojāpāli;* proverbs, etc.[29a] In fact, ancient Assamese literature contains a rich mine of riddles and proverbs, some of which, like the songs and ballads, have now been reduced to writing.[30] Assamese language is very rich in proverbs, and nothing perhaps can better illustrate the cultural achievement of a people than these proverbs.[31] We are not certain, however, about their dates. The best specimens of wise sayings are contained in a work, '*Dākabhaṇitā*, attributed to *Dāka*, written in old *Kāmarūpī* dialect.[32] The work provides an important specimen of the ancient literature of Assam. It is, however, too early to ascribe the work to the 6th century A. D., as done by D. N. Bezbarua.[33] It may have been composed about the 8th century A. D,[34] or even later. It may be that *Dāka* flourished at a time when the written literature of Assam had scarcely taken its birth.[35] The place of the nativity of Dāka is given in the work, which states that he was the native of *Lehidaṅgarā* near modern Barpeṭā.

Ancient Assam produced literature in both Assamese and Sanskrit; but only a very few specimens of writing have been brought to light.

The Sanskrit compositions included, besides the epigraphs of the period, works relating to astrology, astronomy, palmistry, arithmetic, medicine and voluminous Tāntrik works, most of which, however, do not belong to the period prior to the 12th century A. D. The volumes of manuscripts, composed in Sanskrit, preserved at the D. H. A. S. alone, covering all branches of knowledge including *Koṣa*, *Vyākaraṇa*, *Smṛti*, *Jyotiṣa*, *Āyurveda*, *Purāṇa*, *Itihāsa*, etc., some of which are as old as the fourteenth century A. D., present a good

29a. Of these, *ojāpāli*, like the devotional songs (*Baragīta*) of the Vaiṣṇava writers of Assam, has to this day occupied a place of honour in our cultural life ; *tāla* and *rāga*, peculiar to these songs, give an insight into the growth of this indigenous institution, which is now our priceless possession.

30. P.R.T. Gurdon, *Some Assamese Proverbs*.

31. B. Rajkhowa, *Historical Sketch of Old Assam*, Intro., VI-VII.

32. *Descriptive Catalogue of Assamese Manuscripts* (No. 35).

33. *Assamese Language and History of Assamese Literature;* K.R. Medhi, *Assamese Grammar etc.*, Intro., XCIII (for different views).

34. *E.H.K.*, pp. 319f.

35. H.C. Goswami, *Descriptive Catalogue of Assamese Manuscripts*, p. 41.

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picture of the culture of the language and literature in the land : (P. C. Choudhury, *A Cat. of Sanskrit Manuscripts at the D. H. A. S.*) The settlement of Brāhmaṇas and other Aryans, and the royal patronage of Brāmaṇical culture and of learned *paṇḍitas* in the court, contributed largely to the culture of the Sanskrit literature. Kāmarūpa, as testified by Yuan Chwang, was a noted centre of learning.[36] The epigraphs both in prose and verse are written with stately diction and poetic style and some of them may be compared with any other compositions of the period from ancient India. Some of the verses in the epigraphs contain passages from Kālidāsa and Bāṇa, and the scribes tried to imitate their style. The Nowgong grant, for instance, contains passages from the *Raghuvaṁśa*.[37] As noticed by T. Bloch, the writer of the Bargāon grant imitated the style of the *Harṣacarita*.[38] These facts indicate that the composers were well-versed in Sanskrit literature. The specimens no doubt represent the earliest phase of literary compositions in Assam.

The rulers were also noted for their Sanskrit culture. The Gauhāti grant (v. 11) credits Purandarapāla with the epithet '*sukavi*'. The *Nītikusuma*, a work on statecraft, based on *Śukranīti*, was composed by him. In the anthology of the '*Kavīndra- vacana-samuccaya*',[39] Harṣapāla, who was the king of Kāmarūpa, is credited with the composition of a verse.[40] This king is described in the grants of Dharmapāla as being favoured by the goddess of learning.[41] The anthology of Śrīdharadāsa, the '*Saduktikarṇāmṛta*',[42] presents us with no less than ten verses of Dharmapāla, who was no other than the king Dharmapāla of Kāmarūpa.[43] In his Puṣpabhadrā grant (v. 8) Dharmāpala is described as '*kavicakravāla cūḍāmaṇi*', and eight verses of the said grant were composed by him. The facts that the king Bhāskaravarman sent volumes of fine writing on aloe bark leaves to Harṣa of Kanauj, as mentioned in the *Harṣacarita*, which was evidently in Sanskrit, and the king desired to have a Sanskrit translation of *Tao-to-king*, a treatise on Taoism, from China, show that he was well-versed in the language and its literature.

36. Watters, II, pp. 185f.
37. Hoernle, *J.A.S.B.*, LXVI, pp. 288-89.
38. *J.A.S.B.*, LXVII, I, pp. 99f.
39. Ed. F. W. Thomas, pp. 47-48.
40. N.N. Dasgupta, *J.A.R.S.*, IV, pp. 56-57.
41. Khonāmukhi grant, V 9; Śubhaṅkarapāṭaka grant, V 9.
42. M.M.R. Śarmā, *The Punjab Oriental Series*, XV, 1933 (No. 162), p. 63.
43. N.N. Dasgupta, *J.A.R.S.*, IV, pp. 56-57.

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An important Sanskrit work of an earlier period is the *Kāmarūpa Nibandhanīya-khaṇḍasādhya*', dealing with planetary worship and ascribed to about A. D. 665.[44] Some writers attribute the composition of the *Ratnāvalī* to Harṣadeva of Kāmarūpa during the 8th century A. D. In the prelude to the work, its authorship is attributed to one Śrī Harṣadeva, and Wilson identifies him with the king of Kāśmīra of the 11th-12th century A. D.[45] This view is not tenable,as quotations from the work have been noticed in the *Sarasvatīkaṇṭhābharaṇa* of Bhoja (A. D. 1019-1046), the *Daśarūpa* of Dhanañjaya (10th century A. D.), *Dhvanyāloka* of Ānandavardhana (A. D. 857-884) and other works. Some writers identify the author with Harṣa of Kanauj, on the basis of a passage from the *Kāvyamīmāṁsā* of Rājaśekhara, quoted by Ettinghausen.[46] One Dhāvaka Bhāsa, a court poet of Śrī Harṣavikrama has been credited with the authorship of the work along with *Nāgānanda*, *Priyadarśikā* and others, and it is supposed that he passed off these works under the name of his patron. Rājaśekhara here has confounded the well-known Bhāsa, the author of the *Svapna-Vāsavadattā* with Dhāvaka Bhāsa; Harṣa-śilāditya, the author of *Nāgānanda* with Śrī Harṣavikrama, the patron of Dhāvaka Bhāsa and Śrī Harṣa, the author of the *Ratnāvalī*. The clue to the identification of Śrī Harṣa is found in the verses in the beginning of the work:

> "*jita Muḍupatinā namaḥ Surebhyo,*
> *Dvija vṛṣab'ıā nirupadravā bhavantu*" [47]

The expression '*jita Muḍupatinā*' refers to *Kṛṣṇa*. As given in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* (v. 29, vv. 16-21), *Muḍu* was the defender of the city of Prāgjyotiṣa, and when *Kṛṣṇa* killed him, Narakāsura resisted the attack of *Kṛṣṇa*, in which the former was killed. The reference is significant, as we know the king Harṣa of Kāmarūpa, belonged to the family of Naraka. The identification of Śrī Harṣa, the author of *Ratnāvalī* with Harṣadeva of Kāmarūpa, the conqueror of *Gauḍa*, *Kaliṅga*, *Kośala* and other lands seems also to rest on other evidence. In the fourth act of the drama we find a description of the conquest of *Kośala*. Bāṇa in his *Harṣacarita* (III, 141) speaks of the wine-flushed cheek of the Mālava women. This is depicted also in the first canto of the *Ratnāvalī*. This shows that the drama was written about the 7th-8th century A.D. and not later than the 9th

44. Puruṣottoma Bhattacharya, *J.A.R.S.*, X, pp. 73f.
45. *J.A.R.S.*, III, p. 5.
46. Intro. to S.R. Roy's edition of the *Ratnāvalī*, p. 9.
47. S.R. Roy, *Ratnāvalī*, pp. 18-19.

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century A.D., as it is quoted in the *Dhvanyāloka*. The chronology, therefore, fits in with the period of Harṣadeva of Kāmarūpa.[48]

The *Mūdrārākṣasa* of Viśākhadatta, patronised by Avantivarman, was probably composed in Kāmarūpa.[49] Abhinavagupta, a Kāmarūpa Buddhist scholar of the 9th century A.D., who was engaged in a controversy with Śaṅkarācārya,[50] was the author of two works, *Tantrāloka* and *Tantrasāra*.[51] Perhaps the greatest contribution to the Tāntrik literature, written in Sanskrit, a work of much historical and cultural value, is the *Kālikā Purāṇa*, classed among the *Upa-Purāṇas*.[52] It contains 91 chapters dealing with varied subjects. J.C. Roy and P.K. Gode place the work in about A.D. 1000.[53] On the basis of Hemādri's quotation from the work in his '*Caturvarga Cintāmaṇi*', it is held that there was an earlier work than this, written by *Smārta Śākta* and this earlier work might have been written between A.D. 650—900; and the present work was composed in Assam about A.D. 1000—1100.[54] In any case, it is evident that the present *Kālikā Purāṇa* was composed in Assam , probably during the reign of Dharmapāla.[55] The *Dākārṇava*,[56] another *Vajrayāna* work was compiled in Eastern India, most probably in Kāmarūpa. In the opinion of G. Tucci, the work is devoted to the cult of *Dākinīs* and *Yoginīs*.[57] Pandit H.P. Śāstrī attributes the authorship of the work to *Dāka*, the writer of wise sayings (*aphorisms*).[58] But this is wrong. *Dāka*, the writer of *Dākabhaṇitā*, whom we have already mentioned, was a quite different person and has nothing to do with the *Dākārṇava*, which is a Tāntrik work, dealing with the propitiation of *Dākas* and *Dākinīs* (male and female evil

48. See J.C. Ghosh, *J.A.R.S.*, III, pp. 5-9.
49. J.C. Ghosh, *J.P.A.S.B.*, XXVI, pp. 241f.
50. Aiyar, *Śrī Śaṅkarāchārya—His Life and Times*, p. 56.
51. According of Bühler, Abhinavagupta died in A.D. 982. Weber places him in the beginning to the 11th century A.D. (*History of Indian Literature*,p. 322). Macdonell holds that he wrote his *Dhvanyāloka* in about A.D. 1000 (*India's Past*, p. 103). One Abhinavagupta is associated with the teaching of Śaivism in Kāśmīra in about A.D. 1100. who wrote his *Paramārthasāra* (Barnett, *J.R.A.S.*, 1910, pp. 707-747; Grierson, 1334-38). He was evidently different from Abhinavagupta, associated with Śaṅkarācārya: (K.C. Pandey, *Abhinavagupta-An Historical and Philosophical Study*).
52. V. Raghavan, *J.O.R.*, Madras, XII, pp. 331-360; Eggeling, *India Office Catalogue*, London, VI, pp. 1189-92 (No. 3339) and p. 1192 (No. 3343); Keith, *Ibid.*, II pp. 907-8.
53. *Bhāratavarṣa*, XVII , II, p. 677; *J.O.R.*, Madras, X, 289-94.
54. Hazra, *A.B.O.R.I.*, XXI, pp. 38f; XXII, pp. 1-17.
55. *I.H.Q.*, XXIII, p. 322.
56. Ed. N. N. Chaudhury.
57. *J.P.A.S.B.*, XXVI, p. 157.
58. *Report on the Search of Sanskrit Manuscripts*, 1895-1900.

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spirits).[59] Nāgārjuna, the disciple of Saraha or Rāhula and one of the *Vajrayāna* teachers who flourished about the 10th century A.D.[60] composed two works, the *Yogaśataka*, a medical work dealing with one hundred prescriptions and the *Boodhicitvavivarṇana*.[61] He is mentioned also by Alberuni as having flourished about 100 years before his time, i.e., about the middle of the 10th century A.D. He was, therefore, quite a different person from the great Nāgārjuna of the *Mahāyāna* school.[61a] The *Kaulajñānanirṇaya*,[62] *Akulavīratantra* and *Kāmākhyāguhyasiddhi*, all Tāntrik works, ascribed to about the 11th century A.D. are attributed to Mīnanātha or Matsyendranātha, who hailed from Kāmarūpa.[63] It is likely that these works were written here, which was the scene of most of his activities. Mīnanātha's disciple Gorakṣanātha also wrote important *Vajrayāna* works like the *Gorakṣasaṁhitā*[64] and the *Kāmaratna Tantra*.[65] Sahajayoginīcintā, who also belonged to Kāmarūpa, wrote an important work, entitled *Vyaktabhāvānugatatatvasiddhi;* one manuscript of this work has been preserved in the Oriental Library of Baroda.[66] Most of these works, as we have stated, were written in a mixture of old *Kāmarūpī-Maithilī* dailect rather than in *Prākṛt* or pure Sanskrit. Some of these works, like the *Yoginī Tantra* and the *Hara-Gaurī-Saṁvāda*, however, belong to a period later than the twelfth century A.D., but their importance lies in the fact that these works preserve historical traditions of an earlier period. The *Yoginī Tantra*, written in Sanskrit in Assam, is really a treatise containing much historical informations like the *Hara-Gaurī-Saṁvāda*, written in both Assamese and Sanskrit.[67] Among the Sanskrit and Assamese works of a later period, but recording the traditions of an earlier period, may also be mentioned many mauscripts on Tāntrikism, *Smṛti*, Astrology, Astronomy, Palmistry, Medicine and *mantra* puthis.[67a]

59. *E.H.K.*, pp. 325-26.
60. *Ibid.*, p. 159 (f.n.).
61. P. Patel, *I.H.Q.*, VIII, pp. 790-93; P.C. Bagchi, *Ibid.*, VII, pp. 740-41.
61a. See Dharmanath Tarkatirtha & P.C. Choudhury : *Vaidyakasāroddhāra*, *Introduction*, about his dates and contributions to *Āyurveda* in Assam.
62. Ed. P.C. Bagchi.
63. G. Tucci, *J.P.A.S.B.*, XXVI, p. 132f.
64. Ed. P.K. Kaivarta.
65. Ed. H.C. Goswami; *Des. Cat. Ass. Mss.* (No. 70).
66. See B. Bhattacharya, *Introduction to Buddhist Esoterism.*
67. *Descriptive Catalogue of Assamese Manuscripts* (No. 54).
67a. The earliest known *Smṛti* work of the fourteenth century A. D. is the *Smṛti-sāgarasāra* or *Smṛti-Gangājala* of Dāmodara Miśra, who also compiled a commentary of *Kīrātārjunīa* by Bhāravi : (See M.R. Sastri & P.C. Choudhury, *Introduction to Smṛti-Jyotiṣa-sārasaṁgraha.*)

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It is to be admitted that, in the formative period of Assamese language and literature, or prior to the twelfth-thirteenth century A.D. there were only a very few Assamese writers. It is believed that writers like Aniruddha Bhaṭṭa, Nītivarman and Puruṣottama Vidyāvāgīśa flourished in or about the twelfth century A.D.,[68] but their dates are still uncertain. The noted grammarian Puruṣottama and the *Smṛtikāra* Pītāmbarasiddhānta-vāgīśa were evidently 16th. century writers and court *paṇḍitas* of the Koch rulers. The earliest writers of the pre-Vaiṣṇava period were Hema Sarasvatī and Harivara Vipra who composed *Prahlāda Caritra* and *Babruvāhana Parva* respectively under the royal patronage of the Kamatā king Durlabhanārāyaṇa, who flourished towards the end of the thirteenth or the early part of the fourteenth century A.D. The next two noted poets of the same period were Rudra Kandali and Kaviratna Sarasvatī who composed *Dıoṇa Parva* and *Jayadratha vadha*.[69] Kaviratna was the court poet of the Kamatā king Indranārāyaṇa, son of Dharmanārāyaṇa of the 13th-14th. century A.D. The most important poet of this period was Mādhava Kandali, whose poetic genius was admitted by his illustrious successor Śaṅkaradeva. Mādhava Kandali translated the entire *Rāmāyaṇa* into Assamese under the patronage of Mahāmāṇikya, a Kachāri king who flourished during the fourteenth century A.D.[70]

In any case, the number of early Assamese works along with a few Sanskrit manuscripts of the period may give us some idea of the literary traditions and activities of the people, and indicate that this was by no means insignificant.

3. Materials used for writing and the preservation of manuscripts :

The existing manuscripts of our period may give us some idea of the writing materials used. These consisted of the inner bark of the *bhūrjapatra*, aloe wood and *sāñcipāt* (aquilaria agallocha), *tulāpāt* (leaves made by pressing cotton) or cotton cloth, wooden-board, palm leaves, animal substances,[71] clay, metal, stone, brick, etc.[72] The *Yoginī Tantra* makes an important reference to writing and engraving on materials like clay, bark-leaves, gold, copper, and silver.[73] The use of clay, copper and

68. See K.L. Barua, *J.A.R.S.*, VII, pp. 75f.
69. *Aspects of Early Assamese Literature*, pp. 32f, 41-45; *E.H.K.*, pp. 320-21.
70. B.K. Kākati, *Assamese—Its Formation and Development*, pp. 12-13; *Aspects of Early Assamese Literature*, p. 23f.
71. D'Alwis reports that the Buddhist works mention skins among the materials (Bühler, *Indian Palaeography*, pp. 8f).
72. See Bühler, *Indian Palaeography*, pp. 8-19.
73. II/VII, 14-16.

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stone as materials for writing, is shown by the existing epigraphs of the period, as for instance, the clay seals of Bhāskara, the Tezpur Rock Inscription of Harjjaravarman and the Nidhanpur copper plates of Bhāskaravarman. Winternitz points out that the Bodleian Library contains a manuscript on wooden board from Assam.[74] The use of aloe bark is evidenced by Bāṇa, who states that among the presents from Bhāskara to Harṣa contained "volumes of fine writing with leaves from aloe bark and of the hue of the ripe pink cucumber."[75] This testifies to the high antiquity of the method of using *sāñcipāt* as a writing material. But the most common materials were *tulāpāt* and *sāñcipāt*.[76] A scientific method was adopted in the preparation of the *sāñci* bark to make it fit for writing, and it was really an arduous task.[77] Most of the Sanskrit and Assamese manuscripts, so far discovered, have been found written on this material, and some of them are in their original condition with fast coloured ink.

The use of ink was common. The word '*maṣi*', the Assamese, '*mahī*', occurs as early as the *Gṛhyasūtras* and there are many references to its preparation.[78] The *Buddhist* and the Jain works mention inkpots (*maṣi-pātra*). In Assam, ink was usually prepared from *śilikhā* (terminalia cibrina) and bull's urine. The use of the sap of earthworms for invisible writing is also found.[79] As the existing manuscripts show, ink, prepared in Assam, is marked by its lasting and glossy character.[79a]

Pen and pencils were made of bamboo, wood, reed , animal horns, metal, chalk, etc., and were commonly known as *lekhanī* or *varṇaka*. In Assamese they are known as '*kalama*'. The *Yoginī Tantra* refers to holders and pens of bamboo, reed, copper, bellmetal, iron and even of gold.[80]

It is not known whether the manuscripts were kept in something like a modern library. We find, however, references to writers and other officers, particularly during the Āhom period, who may have been

74. See Bühler, *Indian Palaeography*, pp. 8f.
75. *H.C.* (Cowell), p. 214.
76. S.K. Bhuyan, *Intro. to Des, Cat. of Assamese Mss.* pp. XVf.
77. During the Āhom period, the art of preparation of *sāñcipāt* was wellknown (Gait, *History of Assam*, pp. 375f).
78. See R.L. Mitra, *Indian prescriptions for preparing ink in Gough's Paper*, etc. p. 18f.
79. *Des. Cat. of Assamese Manuscripts*, Intro., pp. XVf.
79a. For the materials used for writing, see P.C. Choudhury, Preface to the *Catalogue of Sanskrit Manuscripts at the D.H.A.S.*
80. II/VII; V/IX.

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associated both with their composition and preservation. The keeper of grants was commonly known as *Akṣapaṭalika* and the engraver *Lipikāra*. The writers were known as *Kāyasthas*, *Karaṇas* or *Karaṇikas* and *Lekhakas*. The temples and courts, like the Buddhist monasteries and universities, served the purpose of libraries. The court *Paṇḍitas* were moreover entrusted with the work of both composition and care of the manuscripts. Brāhmaṇical, Buddhist and Jain sources, however, testify that the rich and the learned made donations of books to the temples and monasteries. The Vaiṣṇava *satras* of Assam even to-day contain some original works written by the reformers, during the 15th—16th century A. D. The Āhom kings appointed officers to write about contemporary events, and something like a separate establishment was created for the preservation of the records of all kinds.[81] But no systematic and scientific method was adopted during our period for the preservation of manuscripts. That is why we find that many of them have been destroyed and lost owing to lack of care. The rise and fall of dynasties, apathy of the public and natural causes were in no small measure responsible for the destruction of such valuable treasures. "If an exhaustive search is made for Assamese manuscripts and even if the manuscripts hitherto discovered and traced are thoroughly catalogued, we have a firm belief that a far greater percentage of the Indian masterpieces will be found translated into Assamese than in any other vernacular literature—Some manuscript hunter in Assam may come upon a manuscript which will be as momentous as the *Artha-śāstra* of Kauṭilya, the dramas of Bhāsa and the *Samarāṅgaṇa* of king Bhoja".[82] All that have so far been brought to our notice, are found in their most part wrapped up in pieces of cloth or enclosed in wooden boxes, some of which contain beautiful painting.[83]

4. Aim and Centres of education—Curriculum of Studies :

Individual attainments, State and social service, and a preparation for the realisation of the higher ends in life were the main aims of education in ancient times.[84] The emphasis on the moral and spiritual aspects of life greatly shaped the type of education and subjects for studies, and it was, therefore, primarily based rather on theory than on practical vocational training. In spite of the various methods employed

81. *Des. Cat. of Assamese Mss.* Intro. pp. XVII-XVIII.
82, S. K. Bhūyān. *Assamese Literature, Ancient and Modern*, pp. 2, 5; also *Preface to Des. Cat. of Ass. Mss.*
83. H. C. Goswami, *Des. Cat. of Ass. Mss., Intro.* pp. XVf; also for other informations, Bühler, *Indian Palaeography*, pp. 98f.
84. See S. K. Das, *The Educational System of the Ancient Hindus*, pp. 18-23.

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by the state and individuals, education hardly touched the masses, producing thereby a gap between the learned few and the general public; and it could not produce a literate mass on a large scale. It was perhaps culture and not literacy which was the highest aim. Speaking of the value of education among the ancient Indians in general, S. V. Venkatesvara rightly points out that the common "objective of education was cultural, rather than utilitarian, as in the case of Egypt, Assyria and Babylonia—Indian education had much more in common with that of the Hebrews. It was next door to the Persian where also *dharma* and *satya* were the social ideals. It resembled the Chinese in that it saw education in every art.—The main point of contrast with the Greek was in the relative importance given to art and religion".[85]

With all the attainments of the Hindus in different branches of learning and the spread of literacy, therefore, there has always been an underlying current of religious feeling and a firm faith in traditional structure.[86] This faith in the past "made the Hindu scholar narrow, bigoted and conceited". In other words, the "system which made great contributions to the science of grammar and philosophy and other subjects became in course of time stereotyped and formal, unable to meet the needs of a progressive civilisation".[87]

The division of society on the basis of the *varṇāśrama dharma* created a system of gradations and differences in the imparting of education to individuals. Such being the aim, the greater bulk of the non-Aryans in Assam had perhaps to remain beyond the pale of education. The nature of the literary works of the period, mainly dealing with religion, astronomy, astrology, medicine and allied subjects gives us an idea of the aim and the level of education that obtained in ancient Assam.

Before the introduction of the art of writing, learning was transmitted orally in *gurugṛhas*,[88] hermitages and forests rather than in the towns,[89] though all subjects could not be taught there.[90] Even when the art of writing was introduced, oral transmission of learning was continued. The subsequent growth of schools, universities and the establishment of monasteries in ancient India helped in the diffusion of learning of all

85. *Indian Culture through the Ages*, pp. 305f.
86. See A. S. Altekar, *Education in Ancient India*, pp. 225f, 244f,
87. S. K. Das, *Educational System of the Ancient Hindus*, pp. 447f.
88. Nowgong grant of Balavarman, V 31.
89. See R. N. Tagore, *Viśvabhārati Quarterly*, April, 1924, p. 64.
90. See Altekar, (*Education in Ancient India*, pp. 73f, 105f) for separate centres.

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kinds. There were besides, Sanskrit *ṭolas*, temples and places of discussion near the sites of sacrificial ceremonies, wandering scholars, clubs, etc., which also served the purpose of educational centres. Though there is evidence of the existence of schools as early as the 5th century B.C.[91] in the texts, education in ancient India on a large scale, not to speak of Assam, did not begin even before the time of Aśoka, and it was certainly Buddhism, particularly during Maurya times, that paved the way for the growth of popular elementary schools.

In Assam neither epigraphs nor literature supply us with definite information regarding the existence of regular schools except the *gurugṛhas*, Sanskrit *ṭolas*, and village schools provided mainly by the *agrahāras*, created and patronised by the rulers on behalf of and for the maintenance of the Brāhmaṇas. In fact, the royal patronage of the men of literature and Brāhmaṇical culture greatly helped in the diffusion of learning. Those who were endowed with the *agrahāras*, maintained village schools and were keen in discharging their sixfold duties, one of which was *adhyāpanā* (teaching).[92] Their system of education was based mainly on the study of Sanskrit literature and religious works. The maintenance of a *ṭola or chātraśālā* is indicated by the fact that Śaṅkaradeva received all his instruction from Brāhmaṇa *guru* Mahendra Kandali in one such educational institution. The royal court which was the abode of many learned poets and scholars was another centre of learning. Temples and religious establishments like those of the Vaiṣṇava *satras* of Assam, organised on the system of Buddhist monasteries, where discussions of all kinds were daily held, contributed more than any other centre to the spread of social, if not literary, education. The temples were the places of occasional festivals, attended by people of both sexes, young and old, who took part not only in the performance of drama, music and dancing but also listened to important religious discussions. All these activities helped a great deal in the interchange of ideas and the diffusion of knowledge among people of all walks of life, irrespective of colour or creed. We have further evidence of the wandering *vairāgīs* (monks) and visits of scholars to and from Assam, who held discussions with scholars professing different faiths and of different culture, and who helped to a great extent in the spread of education. Not only the Brāhmaṇa scholars but also a number of Tāntrik-Buddhist *siddhas* from Kāmarūpa through their preachings and literary contributions helped in educating the people.

91. See Bühler (*S. B. E.*, XXV, pp. XLVIf) for the beginning of specialisation.
92. Bargāon grant (*J. A. S. B.*, LXVII, I, pp. 99f).

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Whether in the schools or *ṭolas* or in the *gurugṛhas*, the *guru* was considered essential. Mādhavadeva, one of the chief Vaiṣṇava reformers of Assam could become a *guru* only after his training under Śaṅkaradeva. There were probably both Brāhmaṇa and non-Brāhmaṇa *gurus* and students.[93] Śaṅkaradeva who took his instruction under Mahendra Kandali was not a Brāhmaṇa, but he was given instruction in all branches of learning including the religious lore. There were rules for admission and for the guidance of teachers and the taught, and the students received more individual attention than under a modern system. Students in their *gurugṛhas* had usually to work for their teachers instead of paying fees. Starting their educational career in childhood, they were required to remain with their *gurus* till the completion of the period of *Brahmacaryya*. The Nowgong grant (v. 31) mentions the *Samāvartana* ceremony which was performed after the completion of the *Brahmacaryya* period. The *Dharmaśāstras* give a detailed description of the ceremonies.[94]

Ancient Indian literature makes a voluminous reference to the study of the *Vedas*, *Vedāṅgas*, *Upavedas*, besides *Sarpavidyā*, *Piśācavidyā*, *Rakṣavidyā*, *Asuravidyā*, *Itihāsa*, *Purāṇas*, etc., including all vocational training, arts and crafts. The Vedic learning included *Śikṣā* *Chandas*, *Vyākaraṇa*, *Nirukta*, *Jyotiṣa* and *Kalpa*, including the study of the self and God.[95] The local epigraphs mention the study of *Vidyā* and *Kalā*; *Vidyā* includes the four *Vedas*, four *Upa-Vedas*, consisting of the *Āyurveda*, *Dhanurveda*, *Gandharvaveda* and the Tantras, the six *Vedāṅgas*, *Itihāsa*, *Purāṇas*, *Smṛtis*, *Arthaśāstra*, *Kāmaśāstra*, *Śilpaśāstra* *Alaṅkāra*, *Kāvya*, etc. Inscriptions mention the study of the *Vedas*. The Tezpur grant (v. 30) states that Bhijjaṭa studied the Yajurveda with all its accessories: (*sāṅgaṁ yajurvedamadhītavān*). The Bargāon grant (v. 16) states that Devadatta was the chief of the Vedic scholars and the *Vedas* had their aims fulfilled in him. The Puṣpabhadrā grant (v. 14) mentions a Brāhmaṇa well-versed in *Śrūti*, *Smṛti*, *Mīmāṁsā* and *Cāṇakya* (*Arthaśāstra*). Indoka, the donee of the Tezpur grant was well-versed in the *Vedas*.[96] Rāmadeva of *Śrāvasti*, the grandfather of the donee of the Śubhaṅkarapāṭaka grant was chief among the Brāhmaṇas, who were well-versed in the *Vedas*. His son Bharata was skilled in all the six *karmas*, enjoined for Brāhmaṇas.[97] Not to speak of the Brāhmaṇas, even some of the rulers,

93. Cf. *Manu*, (II, X); also Altekar, *Education in Ancient India*, pp. 50f; Bokil, *The History of Education in India*, Pt. I, p. 151.

94. See Altekar, pp. 266f; *History of Dharmaśāstra*, II, pp. 408-415.

95. See S. K. Das, *Educational System of the Ancient Hindus*, pp. 18f.

96. *J. A. S. B.*, IX, II, pp. 766f.

97. *K. S.*, pp. 168f.

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as given in the records, were noted for the knowledge of the *Vedas* and various *śāstras*.[97a] Even Śaṅkaradeva, a *Śūdra*, as stated in his biography, studied the four *Vedas*, fourteen *śāstras*, eighteen *purāṇas*, eighteen *bhāratas*, fourteen *vyākaraṇas*, eighteen *kāvyas*, eighteen *koṣas*, *saṁhitās*, *amara*, *cāṇakya* and *yoga śāstra*.[98] He was really an erudite scholar, besides being a prolific writer, like Mādhavadeva and a reformer in the true sense of the term.

Besides the study of the *Vedas*, the Brāhmaṇas knew various arts and sciences. The grant of Dharmapāla states that the grand-father of the donee possessed like the donor a knowledge of the five arts: (*samyak kalābhiryutaḥ*).[99] The study of the *Arthaśāstra* is shown by the epithet taken by the Brāhmaṇa: (*cāṇakyamāṇikyabhū*).[100] Titles like *Śrūtidhara*, *Paṇḍita* and *Kathāniṣṭha*, borne by the Brāhmaṇas, indicate that they acquired efficiency in the study of the different branches of the Vedic learning.

The study of the *Tantras* is best shown by the voluminous manuscripts of the period, and it is certain that this branch of study was extensively studied by a number of Tāntrik-Buddhists. *Tantra* as a subject of study is mentioned in the Gauhāti grant of Indrapāla, (v. 16) who was conversant with the lore.

The study of the *Jyotiṣa-Vedāṅga* (astronomy and astrology) was widespread. The origin of the science in India goes back to a remote antiquity.[101] The study of the science in Assam in all its branches is indicated not only by place names like Prāgjyotiṣa, Navagraha, etc., but also by the existing manuscripts;[101a] the earliest work on the subject, as we have mentioned, is the '*Kāmarūpa-nibandhanīya-khaṇḍasādhya*'. It is certain that Prāgjyotiṣa was a noted centre of *jyotiṣa* coming probably under the influence of the Alpine-Iranian and the Magians. Epigraphy also proves that the rulers maintained astrologers (*daivajñas*).[102]

97a. On the topic of *Education in Ancient Assam and the Royal patronage* including the contribution made by the rulers to the literary out-put of the land, see P. C. Choudhury, *Cotton College Diamond Jubilee Volume*, pp. 119-127.

98. *Kathā Gurucarita*, pp. 28-39,

99. Puṣpabhadrā grant, V 14.

100. *K. S.*, p. 180; Puṣpabhadrā grant, V 14.

101. See Macdonell, *India's Past*, pp. 181f; Weber, *History of Indian Literature*, p.261.

101a. The extant volumes of manuscripts bearing on *Smṛti* and *Jyotiṣa*, some of which are as old as the 14th. century A. D., if not older, point not only to the extensive culture of the subjects, but also indicate that a Kāmarūpa school of *Smṛti-Jyotiṣa* was developed here : See M. R. Sastri & P. C. Choudhury, *Introduction to Smṛti-Jyotiṣa-sārasaṁgraha*; P. C. Choudhury, *Aspects of the Heritage of Assam*, *I. H. C.*, 22nd Session, Gauhati, pp. 22-30.

102. Kamauli grant of Vaidyadeva, V 8.

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The study of *Itihāsa* and *Purāṇa* is shown by the existence of a number of chronicles and *Purāṇas*. Even the Tāntrik works like the *Kālikā Purāṇa*, the *Yoginī Tantra* and the *Hara-Gaurī-Saṁvāda* contain both historical and religious information.

The study of *Āyurveda* or medicine, concerning both human beings and animals, was widespread. In ancient India the beginning of the science goes back to remote antiquity. In the *Atharva Veda* and the *Kauṣītaki Sūtra*, for instance, we have mention of medicinal herbs and the healing art. Indian literature mentions Caraka, Suśruta and Vāgbhaṭa whose works are based on the *Saṁhitās*. Nāgārjuna, who according to Weber, flourished during the 2nd Century B. C. is said to have revived *Suśruta Saṁhitā*.[103] In Assam the name of another Nāgārjuna is associated with the compilation of a Medical work, *Yogaśataka*. As we have stated, he belonged to the *Vajrayāna* school and was quite different from the earlier person of the same name. He was probably a contemporary of Ratnapāla. Even to-day the Assamese have great faith in the herbs associated with his name and prescribed by medicine men (*ojās*). This Nāgārjuna, therefore, was a physician.[104] The two important manuscripts of a later period, dealing with animal diseases are *Ghorānidāna* of Sāgarakhari and *Hastividyārṇava* of Sukumāra. The Doobi grant (v. 4) states that even rulers were conversant with the science of both elephants and horses. An important earlier work, dealing with the elephant medicine (*Hastyāyurveda*) was compiled by one *Pālakāpya*, most probably in Assam.[105] This is a voluminous work, containing 160 chapters. In spite of the use of herbs, Kāmarūpa remained a noted centre of magic and mantras, and the people in general believed in and cultivated the science of incantation to cure all kinds of illness, including snake-bite.[105a]

The study of various arts (*kalā*), *Śilpaśāstra* and music and dancing (*Gandharvavidyā*) is indicated by the remains of art and architecture. The rulers took particular care in the erection of temples and the fostering of other fine arts, including painting. It is doubtful, however, whether

103. *History of Indian Literature*, p. 287; Macdonell, *India's Past*, pp. 175f.

104. *E. H. K.*, *p.* 159; *J. A. R. S.*, II, pp. 44-51.

105. *Ānandāśrama Sanskrit Series* (No. 26); *J. B. O. R. S.*, V, p. 311.

105a. Besides Nāgārjuna a large number of authorities on *Āyurveda* like Cakradatta, Mādhavakara and Śārangdhara hailed from Kāmarūpa. The extant treatises, composed in both Sanskrit and Assamese bear testimony to the extensive study and practice of the science of indigenous medicines in the land, and in this branch of study as well Kāmarūpa contributed a great deal to the Indian system: (Tarkatīrtha and Choudhury, *Intro. to Vaidyakasāroddhāra*.)

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artists in general were properly trained in schools of varied arts and crafts.

Of the *gandharvavidyās*, music and dancing formed part of a fine aesthetic culture, and these, like other allied arts and sciences, have great antiquity in India. Both literature and epigraphs point to their cultivation in Assam. Assamese music consisted mostly of pastoral songs, accompanied by dancing, of which the folk dance occupied an important place. The use of various instruments and the playing of tunes, particularly in the period of Vaiṣṇava Reformation point to regular culture of music, whether in temples or in public places. The existing material on the subject seems to reveal a distinctive non-Aryan tribal influence. This is noticeable not only in music, dancing, and in the use of various instruments like the jew's harp, bamboo flute, horn, trumpet, etc., which closely resemble those used by the tribes, but also in the '*Bihu*' festival (harvesting ceremony) of the Assamese, the essential elements of which are pastoral ballads, folk songs and dancing. In fact, the tribes are distinguished by their frequent amusements and festivals, the most remarkable feature of which consists of music and dancing of all kinds, and this not in a small measure contributed to the development of and added a new element to Assamese music and dancing.

Yuan Chwang makes an important mention of singing and dancing at the court of Bhāskara when the pilgrim was entertained.[106] Singing, accompanied by musical instruments and dancing, took place during dramatic performances and religious ceremonies. Epigraphs mention both music and musical instruments, and the playing of instruments is shown in a number of sculptures of the period. Early Assamese literature contains many kinds of *rāgas* ((tunes). The grant of Vanamāla (v. 28) refers to singing to the tune of musical instruments. The sculptured specimens show musical instruments, such as *vīṇā*, reed flute (*vāhī*), double pipe (*kāli*), conch-shell, drums, small drums (*ḍamaru*) and many others. Early Assamese literature gives an exhaustive list of musical instruments.[107]

It may be noted that both music and dancing formed part of the Vaiṣṇava culture of Assam. Even Śaṅkaradeva was a great musician and dancer. He taught his followers devotional music, dancing and the art of acting in order to spread Vaiṣṇavism in the different *satras* of the province. This class of music was in the hands of a class of people called *Gāyan-Bāyan*, whose technique was based on *Kīrtana*, *Baragīta*, *Nāmaghoṣā* and other devotional and musical works of the Vaiṣṇava preachers.

106. Watters, II, 185f.

107. See Mādhava Kandali, *The Rāmāyaṇa;* Śaṅkaradeva, *Rukmiṇī-Haraṇa;* Sūryakhari, *Darrang-Rāja Vaṁśāvalī.*

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Musical instruments may ordinarily be divided into *tata yantra* (stringed); *ghana yantra*, including cymbals, gongs, bells, etc.; *ānadha yantra*, including drums, tabors, etc., and *suṣira yantra* consisting of all the wind instruments.[108] As we have stated, the long list of musical instruments in certain works,[109] points to the wide cultivation of the art of music.

Like music, dancing has a long tradition of its culture. The Tezpur grant refers to dancing girls in temples. The sculptures of the period also show dancing poses (*nṛtyamūrtis*). An old Assamese manuscript, *Hastamuktāvalī* of Śubhaṅkara Kavi, composed in the Āhom period, deals with many kinds of *mudrās*.[110] The art formed part of the Vaiṣṇava culture, and on religious occasions even to day Vaiṣṇava dances are performed in the temples. The '*Bihu*' dance constitutes to this day an important element of the Assamese folk-culture and has evidently a non-Aryan feature in it. It is, however, doubtful whether before the Vaiṣṇava period, organised instructions in both music and dancing were given to a considerable number of people. The subject probably attracted a small professional class or individuals.

5. Spread of Education—Effects upon the country as a whole :

The study of the varied subjects and the existing manuscripts point to the nature and the spread of education in ancient Assam. It would be a mistake to hold that only the rulers and the Brāhmaṇas helped in the diffusion of learning: the Tāntrik learning of the land was certainly due to non-Aryan elements, and it is also likely that the Tāntrik-Buddhist *siddhas* were mostly non-Aryans.

The settlement of the Brāhmaṇas and other Aryans in the land under the patronage of rulers was largely responsible for the spread of education, as in other parts of India, and Kāmarūpa, as reported by Yuan Chwang in the 7th century A.D., was a noted centre of learning. 'Men of high talents', writes the pilgrim, 'visited the kingdom'.[111] Bhāskara, he states, was fond of learning and the people followed his example. His association with the university of *Nālandā*, one of the noted centres of learning in the period, and with the pilgrim and Harṣa, one of the most enlightened

108. See Rowbatham, *History of Music*, I; A. J. Hipkins, *Musical Instruments, Historic, Rare and Antique*, 87f.

109. See Mādhavadeva, *Rāmāyaṇa* (*Ādikāṇḍa*).

110. J. K. Miśra thinks that the work belongs to the Mithilā School of Music (*A Hist. of Maithilī Lit.*, I, 34-35).

111. Watters, II, pp. 185f; Beal, II, pp. 195f.

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monarchs of Northern India, indicates his (Bhāskara's) desire for the acquisition of knowledge, which he spread among his people. In fact, Assam owes a great deal to the personality of Bhāskara.

The creation of *agrahāras* for Brāhmaṇas, was due to the fact that the rulers were attracted by Brāhmaṇical culture.[111a] To mention a few instances, the Khonāmukhi grant records that Dharmapāla made a gift of land to a Brāhmaṇa from Madhyadeśa, "the well-known place of residence of Brāhmaṇas, who constantly performed sacrifices and were reluctant to accumulate riches".[112] Jayapāla made a similar gift to the Brāhmaṇa Prahāsa of *Puṇḍra* in North Bengal.[113]

Some well-known *paṇḍitas* from Kāmarūpa were honoured with similar gifts by the contemporary rulers. The biography of Yuan Chwang states that a learned scholar from Kāmarūpa went to the *Nālandā* university to engage in a controversy with the Buddhist scholars there. It was he who informed Bhāskara of 'the high qualities of the Master of the Law'. He was formerly a heretic, but being defeated in a discussion, was converted to Buddhism by the pilgrim.[114] The name of a Brāhmaṇa, Viṣṇusomācārya from *Śṛṅgāṭikāgrahāra* of the *Kāmārupa viṣaya*, belonging to the *Parāśara gotra* and well-versed in the *Veda* and *Vedāṅga*, occurs in a copper plate grant of the Gaṅga king, Anantavarman of Kaliṅga (A. D. 922). The king's brother is stated to have made a gift of land to the Brāhmaṇa at the time of his daughter's marriage.[115] In the opinion of R.K. Ghosal, *Śṛṅgāṭikāgrahāra* may be an unknown district of Kaliṅga.[116] But, as N.N. Das Gupta rightly points out, the evidence of other grants "makes strong case in favour of supporting that it was from the *Kāmarūpa viṣaya* of Assam that Viṣṇusomācārya hailed".[117] That he was from Kāmarūpa, is expressly stated in the grant itself. It is likely that *Śṛṅgāṭika*, where according to the *Kālikā Purāṇa*, existed a *liṅga*, was the same as *Śiṅgri* in modern Darrang.[118]

111a. The Kāmarūpa king Bhūtivarman donated an extensive area of land in North Bengal to as many as 205 families of Brāhmaṇas and other high class Aryan families during the 6th. century A. D., and Bhāskaravarman confirmed this by his Nidhanpur grant, which helped in the spread of the Aryan culture.

112. *J. A. R. S.*, VIII, pp. 113f.

113. Śilimpur grant, V 22.

114. *Life of Yuan Chwang*, pp. 161-165.

115. R. D. Banerji, *History of Orissa*, I, pp. 232-41; *Journal of Andhra Historical Society*, II, pp. 271-76.

116. *E. I.*, XXVI, pp. 62-68.

117. *J. A. R. S.*, VIII, pp. 133-37.

118. A. C. Agarwala, *Āvāhana*, III (No. 4).

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Among the twenty-six donees, to whom the Paramāra king Vākpati Rāja (A.D. 987) granted lands some like Śavara of *Kulañca*, Śaṅkara of *Śāvathikadeśa* and Vāmanaswāmī of *Pauṇḍrika* in *Uttarakūladeśa*, hailed from Eastern India.[119] *Krodañja* or *Kroṣañja*, identified with *Kulañca* and *Śāvathi*, finds mention in the epigraphs of the kings of Kāmarūpa. *Śāvathikadeśa* of the Paramāra grant may be identified with *Śrāvasti* of the inscription of Dharmapāla and *Śāvathi* of Indrapāla. The Nowgong grant of Balavarman and the grants of Ratnapāla and Indrapāla mention *Uttarakūladeśa* and *Dakṣiṇakūladeśa*. The land granted by the Guākuchi grant of Indrapāla is kown as *Paṇḍarībhūmī* in *Mandi viṣaya* of the *Uttarakūladeśa*.[120] On the basis of these identifications and similar references, it is possible to hold that some of the donees of the Paramāra grant hailed from Kāmarūpa and Vāmanasvāmī was evidently a Brāhmaṇa from *Puṇḍra*, which at the time was under Kāmarūpa.[121] The fact that a Paramāra king donated lands to so many Brāhmaṇas from Eastern India and Kāmarūpa seems to indicate that they were noted for their learning and education, which they no doubt spread over their native land.

Moreover, some well-known scholars of India are associated with ancient Assam. Some writers like K.L. Barua believe that even Kauṭilya, whose knowledge of Kāmarūpa was intimate, may have belonged to Kāmarūpa.[122] But the contention is unlikely, as the writer of the *Arthaśāstra* had equally good knowledge of other parts of India. During the rule of the Śālastambha line some noted Buddhist and Brāhmaṇa scholars flourished in Kāmarūpa. As we shall show, Abhinava Gupta, a Buddhist scholar of the 9th century A.D. belonged to Kāmarūpa, and it was perhaps due to the reputation of Kāmarūpa that Śaṅkarācārya (788-820) came to engage with him in a religious discussion.[123] Kumārilabhaṭṭa, another Brāhmaṇa scholar of about the same period may have belonged to Kāmarūpa.[124] This, as we shall show, is based on the *Śaṅkaravijaya* of Mādhavācārya.[125] Viśākhadatta, who was patronised by Avantivarman (alias Śālastambha), was also from Kāmarūpa.[126] Most of the Tāntrik-Buddhist scholars of Eastern India, who contributed so much to the spread of

119. K. N. Dikshit, *E. I.*, XXIII, p. 109.
120. *K. S.*, p. 130f.
121. K. L. Barua, *J. A. R. S.*, V, pp. 112-115; also *K. S.*, pp. 78, 98-99, 122, 136-137, 164-167, 211. Some writers also believe that the writer of the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* belonged to this land.
122. *J. A. R. S.*, VII, pp. 83-86.
123. C. N. K. Aiyar, *Śrī Śaṅkarāchārya—His life and Times*, p. 56.
124. *Ibid.*, p. 26.
125. *Chaps.* I, 53, 55,93; VII, 101.
126. J. C. Ghosh, *J. P A. S B.* XXVI, pp. 241-45; *E. H. K.*, p. 162.

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Tāntrik culture, including Mīnanātha, were from Kāmarūpa. They were largely responsible for maintaining contact between this land, Nepal, Tibet, Orissa and Bengal. Even at a later time the reputation of Kāmarūpa as a centre of culture was established.

Evidence of educated women of the period is very scanty. Some epigraphs describe in a conventional style the qualities of the head as well as of the heart of queens, and only one reference is made to the appointment of an old lady to take care of the royal harem. We find, however, reference to women as rulers in the kingdom of *Kadali* in Nowgong. In the spread of Tāntrik culture, they no doubt contributed equally with men. The name of Sahajayoginīcintā may be cited as an example. The literary education of women is also indicated by the fact that the Kamauli grant of Vaidyadeva was composed by Manoratha in conjunction with his wife Padmā.[127] It was again the ancient practice of the womenfolk in Assam to listen to the contents of the *Epics* and the *Purāṇas*, read out to them by the *paṇḍitas*. But, in spite of these stray references, it is only reasonable to conclude that the general level of culture of Assamese women in the period before the Vaiṣṇava Reformation was in no way high.

6. Conclusion :

It is to be mentioned, however, that not only women but also the Assamese in general, who adopted Hindu culture, even though without regular education, have been accustomed to a type of education, which may be called popular. As S.K. Bhuyan writes, here was to be found what is called an " 'illiterate literacy' of a form unknown in any part of India. An Assamese villager of the older type still carries this tradition about him"; once he is made to speak, we find that he is well acquainted with the contents of the *Epics* and the *Purāṇas*.[128] None the less, because of the absence of the proper organisation of schools on a wide scale, the great bulk of the population no doubt remained illiterate and uneducated. Formal education in ancient Assam, therefore, was not so wide as to touch the general public and was, therefore, confined to a narrow circle. The non-Aryan tribal elements did not enter the picture at all, and there was a wide gap between the level of culture of the learned few and the ignorant massses. Had there been a spread of general education among all, irrespective of their racial origin and faith, present day conditions would have been quite different, and Assam would probably have achieved cultural

127. *E. I.*, II, pp. 347-58; *Gauḍalekhamālā*, pp. 127-46

128. *Assamese Literature—Ancient and Modern*, pp. 2f; also *Preface to Des. Cat. of Assamese Mss.*

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homogeneity at an early period of her history. Wider Assam, far away from the activities of the court and a few individual educational enterprises, remained outside the pale of literary education, so essential for the wider diffusion of knowledge. The true Aryan culture may have attracted a few; but the Tāntrik education and culture that swept over Kāmarūpa, attracted far more adherents and took them away from the right path, until under the benign influence of Vaiṣṇava education of the fifteenth-sixteenth century A.D. under Śaṅkaradeva and Mādhavadeva, they in a large measure were restored in their rightful place in the main body of Hindu culture. For, it was they who through their catholicity in outlook and universalism in the spread of Vaiṣṇava literature and education, destroyed the artificial barriers of peoples, races and classes, and gave Assam a common cultural meeting ground and created fovourable conditions for the much needed linguistic and cultural homogeneity of this ancient land. It is pertinent to observe that Assam's progress in education and literature in its early period, as in the later one, beginning with the thirteenth century A.D., could be possible because of the patronage of literary talents by most non-Aryan but Hinduised rulers, viz the Kachāri, Kamatā and Koch kings of Assam. Be that as it may, mass education in its proper sense was made wide-spread throughout Assam by the special efforts of the prolific writers of the pre-Vaiṣṇava and Vaiṣṇava period, which they did by giving literary garb to the most common and popular thought and expression.

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SECTION 4

RELIGION

1. Non-Aryan cults and their contributions :

We have already pointed to the evolution of the cults of fertility, head-hunting and human sacrifice, Mother Goddess, Śaktism and other animistic beliefs which laid the foundation of Hinduism. We have also discussed the probable contribution made by different races in building up the socio-religious fabric of ancient Assam. One element of the worship of the phallus is fetishism, a belief in crude magic, associated with objects, such as stones and trees. This lay at the root of the religious system not only of the non-Aryans of Assam as in other parts of India, but also of the Hindus in general.[1] The fetish worship supplied the materials for the foundation of Tāntrikism in Assam, with its centre at Kāmākhyā, the temple of the goddess of the *yonī*, developed by the Austric and other elements.[2] The phallic megaliths of Assam also point to the same idea. The worship of both *liṅga* and *yonī* is proved by the *Kālikā Purāṇa*.[3] The *Yoginī Tantra* refers to the existence of a million *liṅga* in Kāmarūpa.[4] The image worship, it is quite likely, originated from that of the phallus.[5]

Fetishism in fact formed part of animism, which lay at the root of the various cults in Assam as elsewhere, contributed to in the main by the non-Aryans. This is based on the attribution of spirits to all things, with which man had a close kinship, for which he felt awe and from which he sought to derive benefit through rites.[6] It is the foundation of every faith and of all people, and in its final analysis, it "includes the belief in souls and in a future state—these doctrines practically resulting in some

1. W. C. Aston, *E. R. E.*, V, pp. 894-98; Spencer, *Sociology*, I. p. 313; R. C. Temple, *E. R. E.*, V. pp. 903-6.
2. Kākati, *Mother Goddess Kāmākhyā*, pp. 35f.
3. *Chapter*, 64.
4. *BK.* I, XI, V 36 : *Koṭīlinga-samākīrṇā Kāmākhyā-kalpavallarī.*
5. Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, II, 143f, 169.
6. Tiele, *Outline of the History of Religion*, p. 9; R. K. Mookerji, *Theory and Art of Mysticism*, pp. 27f. 50-52, 81f, 224. Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, I, pp. 285f, 417-426; II, pp. 184f; Lang, *Myth, Ritual and Religion*, I, pp. 52-59; D' Alvielle Count Goblet. *E. R. E.*, 1, 535-37.

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kind of active worship."[7] The Aryan Hindu worship of the elements of Nature, which developed into the worship of images, through a process of anthropomorphism, is based on the same belief; so is the case with the creation of myths, found everywhere among all classes of people.[8] As remarked by A. Lang, among primitiye and advanced minds "there co-exist the mythical and the religious elements in belief. The rational factor is visible in religion; the irrational is prominent in myth."[9] The Hindu religion is based on both, or it "is animism more or less tempered by philosophy or magic—The Vedas themselves are one source of the manifold animistic practices, which may now be traced all through popular Hinduism."[10]

All the elements of the cult of fertility, head-hunting, human sacrifice, faith in reincarnation, ancestor worship and the rites connected with the dead, belief in heavenly bodies, magic and sorcery are based on the same animistic belief. The existing materials, though meagre regarding ancient Assam, explain these cults. We have already mentioned the cult of fertility in connection with the phallic megaliths. There is little to separate the cult of head-hunting from human sacrifice and even from cannibalism, all of which form part of the same fertility rite. Head-hunting rests in a belief that the soul is located in the head; this belief is found the world over, as among many tribes of Assam. This is attributed to the lithic stage of human culture.[11] The prevalence of the practice in Assam from ancient until recent times, as in the oceanic world and other regions, may be inferred from some ancient monuments of Assam, where carvings of human heads occur. · The evidence of human sacrifice, which may have had its origin in the Mediterranean region,[12] is also reported from other regions of the world,[13] as among the Aryans of India[14] and various tribes of Assam, like the Khāsis,[15] Nagās,[16] Lushāi-Kukis,[17] Gāros,[18]

7. *Primitive Culture*, I, pp. 426-27.

8. *Myth, Ritual and Religion*, I, pp. 163f, 238f, 254.

9. *Ibid.*, pp. 328f.

10. Risley, *C. R. I.*, 1901, I, pp. 350f; *B. C. R.*, 1901, p. 151; also Barnett, *Antiquities of India*, p. 182.

11. Hutton, *Man in India*, X, 207f; *J. R. A. I.*, LVIII, 399f; *J. R. A. S. B.* (N. S.), XXVII, pp. 231-239; *C. R. I.*, 1931, I, I, 398f; *Caste in India*, 203f; Hodson, *F. L.*, XX, 132-43; T. J. Westroff, *F. L.*, XXXIV, p. 235; Burkitt, *Our Early Ancestors*, p. 101; Hose, *Natural Man*, p. 145; C. W. Bishop, *Antiquity*, VII (No. 28).

12. *Hutton, C. R. I.*, 1931, I, I, pp. 392f.

13. Crawley, *E. R. E.*, VI, pp. 840f; Lubbock, *Prehistoric Times*, etc. p. 176.

14. Taylor, *The Origin of the Aryans*, pp. 183f; Lang, *Myth, Ritual and Religion*, I, pp. 267f; Wilson, *J. R. A. S.*, XVI, pp. 96f; *E. R. E.*, VI, p. 849f.

15. Gurdon, *Khasis*, 98f.

16. Hutton, *J. R. A. I.*, LVIII, 399f; *J. P. A. S. B.*, (N. S.) XXVII, 231f; *Man* 1923, 177-78; Hodson, *F. L.*, XX, 132f.

17. Lewin, *Wild Races, etc.*, 273f; Shakespear, *Lushei-Kukis*, 84f.

18. Playfair, *Garos*, pp. 76f, 102f.

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Kachāris,[19] Rābhās,,[20] Chutiās,[21] Ābars[22] and others.[23] Some of these references are, however, based on traditions. The *Kālikā Purāṇa* (67/4, 71-81)and the *Yoginī Tantra* (II/7) mention human sacrifice in the temple of Kāmākhyā and the Copper temple of Sadiyā.[24] It was definitely contributed to by the Austric and Tibeto-Burmans, and formed the basis of Tāntrikism in Assam, which passed on into the Hindu and later Buddhist faiths. It is doubtful whether the practice was prevalent in the Buddhist-Vaiṣṇava temple at Hājo and other places,[25] but it continued to prevail in Kāmākhyā until recent times. In any case, there is little to differentiate between the head-hunters and the sacrificers of human beings. Animals and birds have now taken the place of human beings at Kāmākhyā. It is in the name of religion that the worst horrors of the world were and are being committed by the so-called primitives, and the civilised Hindus have inherited those rites with little or no difference at all.

The disposal of the dead or ancestor worship, associated with the megaliths of the tribes or the funeral rites of the Hindus, is also intimately connected with the cult of fertility and the theory of reincarnation. These cults must have been a legacy of the pre-Aryans and non-Aryans in Assam as elsewhere.[26] The evidence for the nature of the disposal of the dead in ancient Assam is lacking. It is likely that various methods, such as exposure, burial and burning were known, as in other parts of India.[27] It is also possible that exposure and burial preceded burning,[28] and both burial and burning were practised even by the Aryans in ancient India.[29] The practice of burning, particularly by the Khāsi-Synteṅgs, Gāros, Mikirs and others, is proved by some ancient megaliths of Khāsi-Jaintiā Hills and North Cāchār, where human remains were found. These remains are associated with the cult of fertility and ancestor worship. Dalton noticed a few human bones and ashes in earthen pots among the ruins of Tezpur,[30] of not later than the 12th century A.D.[31] The practice of

19. Soppitt, *Kachari tribe, etc.*, p. 31.
20. Pereira, *A. C. R.*, 1911, III, I, 141f.
21. Waddell, *J. A. S. B.*, 1900 III, 42.
22. Dunbar, *Frontiers*, 161f.
23. Gait, *J. A. S. B.*, LXVII, III, 56-65; Lambert, *J. A. R. S.*, VI, pp. 65-67.
24. Blochmann, *J. A. S. B.*, XLII, pp. 240f.
25. P. Bhattacharya, *J. A. R. S.*, VI, pp. 53-54; K. L. Barua, *J. A. R. S.*, VI, pp. 4f.
26. *C. R. I.*, 1931, I, I, 401f; *Caste in India*, 209f.
27. See Crooke, *E. R. E.*, IV, 479-84.
28. Crooke, *J. R. A. I.*, XXIX, 276-94; Aiyanger, *Stone Age in India*, 10f.
29. Dikshit, *Prehistoric Civilisation of the Indus Valley*, 36f; R. L. Mitra, *Indo-Aryans*, II, 138f; Keith, *J. R.A.S.*, 1912, I, 470f; Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, 165; Hillebrandt, *E. R. E.*, IV, 475f.
30. *J. A. S. B.*, XXIV, 12-18. The evidence is significant, as it proves the Hindu practice of the burning of the dead from early times.
31. *A. R. A. S. I.*, 1924-25, 94f.

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stone-cist burial of the skull, as among the Konyaks,[32] or of urn burial of the remains, as done by the Khāsis,[33] suggests the local Aryan Hindu practice of keeping the bones in an earthen pot for ten days or at least for sometime after burning. The practice of keeping bones, as done by some Kukis,[34] or throwing these into water, as done by some Kachāris,[35] or the burial of bones, as done by the Gāros[36] and the Mikirs,[37] or digging graves in a rice-field or near water, as done by the Rengmās,[38] has a parallel in the same Hindu practice; all these are associated with the cult of fertility and ancestor worship. The platform burial of the Āo Nagās[39] may also suggest the Hindu practice of placing the dead on a raised funeral pyre at the time of burning. It is reasonably to be doubted whether practices of these kinds did not arise from those of the non-Aryans in Assam, as a contribution to the Hindu funeral rites as a whole,[40] though it may be that some of them were developed by the Hindus on independent lines. Whatever the ideas associated with these practices,[41] the custom of offering food to the dead, like the erection of memorial stones by the Assam tribes, shows that besides the cult of fertility and ancestor worship, they had a belief in life after death, which is universal throughout the world.[42] The practice of giving offerings to the dead is shown by some ancient monoliths with cavities at the top from Assam. The Hindu *śrāddha* ceremony in fact must have arisen from the same idea of feeding the dead,[43] and it is likely that this, like the '*pūjā*', as opposed to the Aryan '*homa*', was a contribution made by non-Aryans in Assam as in other parts of India.[44]

The variety of *taboos* (restrictions) and rites guiding the life of an individual and the community among the tribes of Assam[45] most probably

32. Hutton, *M. A. S. B.*, XI, p. 39; *Man*, 1927, pp. 61-64; 1929, pp. 201-202.
33. Gurdon, *Khasis*, pp. 132f.
34. Shakespear, *Lushei-Kukis*, 84f; *J. R. A. I.*, XXXIX, 382; Hodson, *Ibid*, XXXI, 304-5.
35. Endle, *Kacharis*, pp. 46f; Soppitt, *Kachari Tribe, etc.*, pp. 39f.
36. Playfair, *Garos*, pp. 105f.
37. Stack and Lyall, *Mikirs*, pp. 37f.
38. *C. R. I.*, 1931, I, I, 401.
39. Mills, *Ao Nagas*, pp. 277f.
40. C. f. *C. R. I.*, 1931, I, I, 401f; *Caste in India*, pp. 209f.
41. See Crooke, *J. R. A. I.*, XXIX, 271-94; Brinton, *Myths of the New World*, 257; Crooke, *E. R. E.*, IV, 479f.
42. Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, I, 426f, 479f; *Ibid*, II, 9f; M. Williams, *Brahmanism and Hinduism*, 277.
43. See Crooke, *E. R. E.*, I, 450-54; *Caste in India*, 205f; Alger, *Future Life*, 81.
44. S. K. Chatterji, *Indo-Aryan and Hindi*, 131f.
45. Hodson, *J. R. A. I.*, XXXVI, 92-103.

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lay at the root of the customary restrictions and rites of the Assamese Hindus of the plains. Much like the tribes, an Assamese house-hold is put under a period of uncleanliness during child-brith, death of an inmate and the menstruation of a woman when certain rules are followed by the individuals or the family concerned. Even to-day a person suffering from small-pox puts his house-hold under a *taboo*, just like the tribes. The worship of the goddess *Śītalā* (small-pox) by the Hindus, suggests the tribal practice of worshipping deities of illness. The worship of the snake goddess (*Manasā*) by the former has a parallel in the latter's worship of snakes. The stoppage of field work on certain days by the tribes compares well with the same Hindu restrictions on days like *ekādaśī* or the *saṁkrānti*. In fact, most of the tribal agricultural rites lay at the foundation of the Assamese Hindu harvesting festival, '*Bihu*' which in its origin was nothing but a solar cult and a cult of fertility, contributed by the pre-Aryan and non-Aryan, such as Austric, Alpine and Tibeto-Burman elements.

Most of the rites, which formed the basis of the Assamese religious life, therefore, other than the orthodox Brāhmaṇical ceremonies, were non-Aryan. The various *pīṭhas* (holy places) except perhaps the Buddhist centres and those of *Sūryya-Viṣṇu*, of Assam had for the most part a non-Aryan and pre-Aryan origin. This will be substantiated when we deal with the origin of the worship of the deities like *Śiva* and *Śakti Devī*. Even the very basis of the theory of incarnation of *Viṣṇu*, traces of which we find from our period, was probably supplied by totemism, believed to have been introduced by the Proto-Austroloids.[46] Evidence of totemism is found among most tribes of Assam.[47] It has "left its mark on the mythologies of the civilised races."[48] It is found even among the Vedic Aryans.[49] As stated by Hopkins, survival of totemism "may be suspected in the 'fish' and the 'dog' peoples of the *Rig Veda* as has been suggested by Oldenburg."[50] The '*matsyas*', according to Macdonell and Keith, were Aryans.[51] The *avatāras* (incarnations) of the Hindus, like the fish, tortoise, boar, etc., therefore, show the influence of the system, and

46. *C. R. I.*, 1931, I, I, 443f.
47. See Hutton, *Caste in India*, 225f; Gurdon, *Khasis*, 65f, 159f; Mills, *Ao Nagas*, 13f; Hutton, *Sema Nagas*, 85, 128; *Angami Nagas*, 91f, 117, 373f, 390-97; Endle, *Kacharis*, 24f; 81f; Hodson, *Naga Tribes*, App. II; *Meitheis*, 118; *J.R.A.I.*, XXXI, 303; Frazer, *Totemism and Exogamy*, II, 327; Parry, *Lakhers*, 233; Dunbar, *Frontiers*, 208f; Furness, *J. R. A. I.*, XXXII, 448; B. N. Datta, *Man in India*, XIII, pp. 97f.
48. Lang, *Myth, Ritual and Religion*, I, p. 60; Frazer, *Totem and Taboo*, p. 5.
49. Mac. and Kieth, *Vedic Mythology*, 153; Risley, *Asiatic Quarterly*, No. 3, p. 537.
50. *Religions of India*, p. 537.
51. *Vedic Index*, I, p. 378.

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the traces of the worship of animals and trees, personified as deities, also point to the same conclusion.[52]

It is well known that Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa are associated with astronomical beliefs, magic and sorcery, omens and even the practice of lycanthropy, which has been traced among some tribes.[53] The worship of the heavenly bodies,[54] and the myths of their origin, go back to a remote period, when man first had to depend upon sunshine, rain, etc., for his agriculture. In its origin, the faith is associated with Egypt, Asia Minor, China and the Pacific region.[55] The prevalence of this belief in Assam is proved not only by literature and temples dedicated to the sun, but also by the occurrence of heavenly bodies on some ancient monoliths, attributed to the Austric, Tibeto-Burman and other elements. It is likely that the cult was developed by the Alpine-Irānians, coming into contact with the earlier elements. Similarly, the belief in magic and *mantras*, associated with Kāmarūpa-Kāmākhyā, the survival of which may be found in a place like Māyang, may have been contributed by the various elements. All these have formed the basis of the Assamese Hindu culture. Like magic and sorcery, omens and divinations are but the "relics of the savage mental state", though found among all, whether primitive or civilised.[56] Even to-day an Assamese, whether Hindu or non-Hindu, is very superstitious. The way in which a dream is believed to bear fruit or an omen is taken to indicate an impending good or evil, or a snake-bite is cured by charms, and a man possessed of a ghost is relieved by a medicineman, only justify the origin of the name of Kāmarūpa and its reputation as a land of magic or necromancy. In fact, every people is more or less superstitious, but the Assamese are more so, and it is natural that these black arts formed the ground-work of Assamese religious life.

Before the introduction of the *Āryyadharma* and Brāhmṇical faith, therefore, the foundation for the evolution of various cults in Assam was laid by Austric, Alpine and Tibeto- Burman elements. It was natural that Brāmaṇism, more appropriately, *Aryanism* had to be modified to a great extent by these cults, and, by a process of absorption, had

52. Hopkins, *Religions of India*, pp. 430; Macdonell, *History of Sanskrit Literature*, p. 111; B. N. Datta, *Man in India*, XIII, pp. 97f.

53. See Hutton, *J. P. A. S. B.*, XXVII, 231-39; *F. L.*, XXXIV, 234; *J. R. A. I;* L, 41-51; J. A. MacCulloch, *E. R. E.*, VIII, 206-220.

54. See *Primitive Culture*, II, 248f.

55. *C. R. I.*, 1931, I, I, 392f; *F. L.*, XXXVI, 113f; T. C. Das, *J. D. L.*, XI, 87f; Quaritch Wales, *The Making of Greater India*, p. 69.

56. Lang, *Myth, Ritual and Religion*. I, pp. 122f; Hodson, *Primitive Culture of India*, pp. 4f.

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to incorporate into its fold not only a number of non-Aryan deities, but also to introduce various local myths and rituals. Even after the spread of Hinduism, the non-Aryan cults continued to survive and influence it to a considerable extent, with the result that in a single religious centre like Hājo or Kāmākhyā we find a meeting place of all the Aryan and non-Aryan faiths. A detailed treatment of these will give us an idea of such assimilation.

2. The Āryya dharma and Brāhmaṇical rites :

The origin of the Brāhmaṇical religion and Aryan culture goes back to the *Vedas*. It consisted of the worship of the elements of Nature, but later on it was developed into the worship of personified deities, in the midst of which, something like a doctrine of monotheism was worked out with many philosophical ideas.[57] How and in what form it was introduced in Kāmarūpa is not known; but some earlier references to the study of the Brāhmaṇical literature and the composition of Brāhmaṇical works both by the Brāhmaṇas and the rulers indicate that the Aryan religion had gained some ground in the land at least by the 5th-6th century A. D., if not earlier. The worship of Brāhmaṇical gods is proved both by records and remains. We have discussed elsewhere the question of the early introduction of the Aryan culture on the basis of the *Brāhmaṇas*,[58] the *Gṛhya Sūtras*[59] and the *Epics*.[60] Even the *Buddhist Nikāyas* mention two *Lauhitya Brāhmaṇas*,[61] indicating that as early as the Buddhist literature, the Brāhmaṇical religion had gained a strong-hold in the *Lauhitya* region or Kāmarūpa.[62] We have also shown reasons to believe that the first political dynasty, founded by Alpines chiefs, such as Naraka and Bhagadatta, came under the influence of the Aryans and that they were responsible for the establishment of high class Aryans in the land. The *Arthaśāstra*,[63] the *Bṛhatsaṁhitā*,[64] based on the *Parāśara Tantra*,[65] the *Raghuvaṁśa* (iv, 81-84), the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* and other works definitely point to the spread of the

57. See Barnett, *The Heart of India*, p. 19; *Antiquities of India*, p. 4; *The History and Culture of the Indian People*, *Vedic Age*, I, pp. 360f.

58. *Śathapatha Brāhmaṇa*, I, IV, I, 14-15; J. Eggeling, *S. B. E.*, XII, pp. 104f, Intro., pp. XLIf; Weber, *Indian Studies*, I, pp. 170f; *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, I, 3, 7, Dikshitar. *I. H. Q.*, XXI, pp. 29-33.

59. *Śāṅkhyāyana Gṛhya Saṁgraha*, II, 38.

60. *Rāmāyaṇa*, *Ādikāṇḍa*, 35; *Kiṣkindhyākāṇḍa*, 42.

61. *Dīgha Nikāya*, I, 224; *Saṁyutta Nikāya*, IV, 117.

62. B. M. Barua, *I. H. Q.*, XXIII, 203-5.

63. *Bk.* II, Chap. XI.

64. XIV, 6; XVI. I.,

65. Kern, *Introduction to the Bṛhatsaṁhitā*, p. 32.

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Aryan culture in ancient Assam. The Aryanised names Prāgjyotiṣa and Kāmarūpa, which find mention as early as the *Brāhmaṇas* and the *Gṛhya Sūtras*, also point to the same conclusion. Yuan Chwang's testimony that hundreds of Deva temples, evidently of Aryan or Brāhmaṇical gods, existed in Kāmarūpa,[66] indicates that during the 7th century A. D. Brāhmaṇical culture or the *Āryya dharma* was wide-spread in the land. This is confirmed by the Nidhanpur grant, which states that Bhāskaravarman spread the *Āryya dharma* by dispelling the darkness of the *Kali* age.

The spread of Aryan culture was largely due to the settlement of Brāhmaṇas in the land. We have already stated that it was the systematic policy of the rulers to create *agrahāras* for them. This royal patronage helped in the spread of Brāhmaṇism, more appropriately the *Āryya dharma* The earliest known instance of this was in the reign of Bhūtivarman as early as the 6th century A. D., who donated lands in North Bengal to as many as 205 Brāhmaṇa and other high class Aryan families.[67] Similar grants were made by Bhāskara and his successors throughout the ancient period. "It is remarkable", writes P. Bhattacharya, "that while in the neighbouring province of Gauḍa (Bengal) the alleged import by Ādiśūra of five Brāhmaṇas from Kanauj or the mythical creation of the *saptaśatī* (700) Brāhmaṇas is not attributed to a period earlier than the eight century A. D. there should be so many Brāhmaṇas found in a single village in Kāmarūpa two centuries earlier".[68] The kingdom in his opinion "appears to have been a refuge of the Brāhmaṇas of the neighbouring kingdoms—that most of the Brāhmaṇa families in the neighbouring province of (modern) Bengal are the descendants of those Brāhmaṇas from Kāmarūpa."[69] This, he writes on the basis of the donees of the Nidhanpur grant. The land was donated in Bengal, not in Kāmarūpa proper, and, as we have shown elsewhere, it is reasonable to believe that most of these Brāhmaṇas belonged to a stock of the Alpines. It may be, as held by P. Bhattacharya that, there were Brāhmaṇas in Kāmarūpa as early as the 6th century A. D. or even earlier, but it is unlikely that most of the modern Brāhmaṇas of Bengal are the descendants of Kāmarūpa Brāhmaṇas. Both the Vedic and Alpine Brāhmaṇas might have settled in North Bengal as in Kāmarūpa almost about the same period. Coming to Kāmarūpa again, epigraphs make other references to the

66. Watters, II, pp. 185f.
67. Nidhanpur grant, last plate.
68. *E.I.*, XIX, p. 116.
69. *Ibid.*, p. 246.

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creation of *agrahāras* and the settlement of Brāhmaṇas of various *gotras*.[70] The Khonāmukhi grant states that Dharmapāla made a gift of land to a Brāhmaṇa from Madhyadeśa.[71] Similar donation was made by Jayapāla to Prahāsa.[72]

The spread of the Brāhmaṇical culture is also proved by the fact that a large number of noted Brāhmaṇa scholars flourised in Kāmarūpa, and some of them were honoured with land-grants by contemporary rulers. We have already stated that a Brāhmaṇa scholar from Kāmarūpa went to *Nālandā* to engage in a controversy with the Buddhist scholars there.[73] The grant of the Gaṅga king Anantavarman (A. D. 922) proves that he granted lands to Viṣṇusomācārya from Kāmarūpa.[74] Another grant of the Paramāra king Vākpati Rāja (A. D. 981) proves that he granted lands to Vāmanasvāmī of Kāmarūpa.[75] We have also shown that noted scholars like Viśākhadatta[76] and Kumārilabhaṭṭa[77] may have belonged to Kāmarūpa. These are some of the instances to prove that Brāhmaṇical culture and religion had already gained some ground in the land.

The spread of the religion is revealed by a number of *yajñas* and rituals, associated with the orthodox Brāhmaṇical Hinduism, performed by the rulers, Brāhmaṇas and other classes. We have already referred to the study of the Vedas, which constitutes one of the five great sacrifices.[78] Puṣyavarman was equal to *Indra* in sacrifices.[79] Mahendra performed many *yajñas*,[80] and "was the repository of all sacrificial rites."[81] Balavarman performed many liberal sacrifices[82]. Indrapāla performed many *yajñas* and was the foremost among all who performed many religious ceremonies.[83] There were utterances of prayers and hymns in temples.[84] Ratnapāla "studded the earth with white-washed temples—the sacrificial courtyards with immolating posts, the sky with the smoke

70. Tezpur grant. V 30; Nowgong grant, V 26; Bargāon grant, V 16; Śuālkuchi grant, V 16; Gauhāti grant, V 21; Guākuchi grant, V 21; Śubhaṅkarapāṭaka grant, V 17; Puṣpabhadrā grant, V 12, etc.
71. *J. A. R. S.*, VIII, pp. 113f.
72. Śilimpur grant, V 22.
73. *Life of Yuan Chwang*, pp. 161f.
74. *E. I.*, XXVI, pp. 62-68.
75. *E. I.*, XXIII, p. 109.
76. J. C. Ghosh, *J. P. A. S. B.*, (N. S.), XXVI, pp. 244f.
77. See C. N. K. Aiyar, *Śaṅkarācārya—His Life and Times*, p. 26.
78. Barnett, *Antiquities of India*, pp. 145f.
79. Doobi grant, V 5.
80. *Ibid.*, V 19.
81. Nidhanpur grant, V 12.
82. Doobi grant, V 12.
83. Śubhaṅkarapāṭaka grant, V 7.
84. Tezpur grant, V 28.

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of burnt offerings".[85] The Puṣpabhadrā grant states that the Brāhmaṇa Madhusūdana hailed from *Khyātipalli* which was inhabited by religious Brāhmaṇas. In that village the smoke of sacrifices overcast the sky and the sound caused by the reciting of the Vedas there was, as it were, the sound of ripples seen in the junction of the *Gaṅgā* and the *Yamunā*.

The Brāhmaṇas, as given in the Bargāon grant, practised the sixfold duties of *yajana*, *yājana*, *adhyāpanā*, *adhyayana*, *dāna* and *pratigraha*. Bharata, the father of the donee of the Śubhaṅkarapāṭaka grant performed the six-fold duties, enjoined for Brāhmaṇas. The *agnihotra* sacrifice, one of the Śrauta rites,[86] required to be performed by the Brāhmaṇas throughout their life, was performed by Devadatta's son.[87] The *agniṣṭoma*, one of the seven *Soma* sacrifices,[88] was performed by a Brāhmaṇa donee of the Khonāmukhi grant.[89] Devadhara as an *adhvaryu* priest performed the *vaitānika rites* (relating to three sacrificial fires) properly and without confusion.[90] Epigraphs also prove that the rulers performed the *abhiṣeka*, *aśvamedha* and other orthodox sacrifices in the manner prescribed by the texts.

Both literature and epigraphs further prove the performance of other orthodox rites, such as *tapas*,[91] *yapa*, *tīrtha*, *snāna* and *dāna*, all of which formed an important part of the life of a Brāhmaṇa. These rites were practised also by rulers. Vanamāla "having bravely endured the rite of (religious suicide through) starvation became absorbed into the light of the Divine Being".[92] The Brāhmaṇas also practised *sandhyā* and *yapa* thrice daily according to the injunctions of the *śāstras*.[93] *Tīrthas* were associated both with temples and rivers. It awas considered meritorious to go on pilgrimage to sacred places.[94] The *Yoginī Tantra* classifies the *tīrthas* into *vīthi*, *upavīthi*, *pīṭha*, *upapīṭha*, *siddhapīṭha*, *mahāpīṭha*, *Brahmapīṭha*, *Viṣṇupīṭha* and *Rudrapīṭha*.[94a] Most of the *tīrthas*

85. Gauhāti grant, V 10.
86. P.V. Kane, *History of Dharmaśāstra*, I, II, pp. 998-1,008.
87. Bargāon grant, V 17.
88. *History of Dharmaśāstra*, I, II, pp. 1133-1203.
89. *J.A.R.S.*, VIII, pp. 113f.
90. Nowgong grant, V 27.
91. Nowgong grant, V 26.
92. *Ibid.*, V 17.
93. Puṣpabhadrā grant, V 11
94. Kamauli grant, (*E.I.*, II, pp. 247f); see also *Kāmarūpar Burañjī*, (Ed.) S. K. Bhuyan, pp. 118f.

94a. I/11 : This nine categories represent *navayonī* at Kāmākhyā : *Navayonī samākhyātā Kāmākhyā-yonīmaṇḍalaṁ*. The varieties in *Kālikā Purāṇa* (62/96-97) are : *Guptakāmā*, *Śrīkāmā*, *Vindhyavāsinī*, *Koṭiśvarī*, *Vanasthā*, *Pādadurgā*, *Dīrgheśvarī* and *Bhuvaneśvarī*.

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were situated either on the banks of rivers or on hill tops. Both the *Kālikā Purāṇa* (79) and the *Yoginī Tantra* mention a number of them, such as *Kāmākhyā*, *Hayagrīva*, *Aśvakrānta*, *Urvaśī*, *Maṇikarṇeśvara*, *Siddheśvarī*, *Apunarbhava*, *Pāṇḍunātha*, etc. They also mention a number of *kuṇḍas*, including those of *Śiva* and *Devī-kṣetras* : (*Yoginī Tantra*, 11/1-9). There were others like the *Kāmapīṭha* of the Tantras and *Hemapīṭha* in Kāmarūpa of the *Raghuvaṁśa*.[95] The existing evidence proves that most of them are associated with the Tantrik faith rather than with orthodox Brāhmaṇism, and in some cases we find an admixture of both the faiths.

In the *Mahābhārata* we find *Karatoyā*, *Probhāsa*, *Puṣkara*, *Naimiṣa* and others among the sacred streams. The *Purāṇas* mention the *Lauhitya* shrine (*Paraśurāmakuṇḍa*).[96] The *Kālikā Purāṇa* recommends *snāna* in a number of *Nadī-tīrthas* (78) and states that mere bath in the *Lauhitya* leads to emancipation: *Lauhitya-toye yaḥ snāti sa kaivalyamavāpnuyāt*.[97] The *Yoginī Tantra* (II, 6-9) states that it purifies all sins: (*Lauhityaṁ nāma tattīrthaṁ snānānnaśyati pātakaṁ*). Inscriptions mention ceremonial bath on different occasions. The Nowgong grant, for instance, refers to *kriyāṅgasnāna*.[98] The *Yoginī Tantra* (II/1-9) emphasises on the usefulness of *snāna* in a number of rivers and *kuṇḍas*.

The practice of *dāna* by rulers is proved by epigraphs. Almost all of them made donation of lands. The gift of land was considered meritorious, as the donor thereby was believed to obtain rebirth in heaven.[99] Kings also made special gift of lands, houses and other provisions to Brāhmaṇa youths after the completion of their period of education (*samāvartana*) in the *gurugṛhas*.[100] Aparārka quotes from the *Kālikā Purāṇa* in dealing with this *naiveśikadāna*. By such provisions the donor was believed to enjoy all religious merits, and he lived in heaven in happiness. The Kamauli grant (v.20) records "that the gifts and donations to Brāhmaṇas" were meritorious. The grant of Vallabhadeva (v. 27) makes an important reference to this religious merit, which the king obtained by the erection of an alms-house (*bhaktaśālā*).

Certain religious gifts were known as great gifts (*mahādānas*).[101] Certain Purāṇas mention as many as sixteen such gifts, of which

95. IV, 84.
96. *Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa.*
97. 83/38.
98. V 32; Puṣpabhadrā grant, V 11.
99. C.f. Nidhanpur grant, V 27.
100. Nowgong grant, V 31.
101. *Agni Purāṇa*, 209, 23-24.

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tulāpuruṣa is considered to be the most important.[102] The Tezpur grant (v. 29) records that Vanamāla made an endowment of lands, including gold, elephants and girls to the Śiva temple. We have stated in another connection that the king Jayapāla made a *tulāpuruṣa* gift of 900 gold coins and land yielding an income of a thousand coins to the Brāhmaṇa Prahāsa.[103] Hemādri in *Dānakhaṇḍa* deals with the *mahādāna*, accompanied by sacrifices and other gifts to the Brāhmaṇas.[104] All gifts were made according to Hindu texts, and particularly after *snāna*,[105] and on auspicious days. The Nowgong grant was made on the day of *Caitra Saṁkrānti*.[106] The Bargāon grant (v. 20) was issued on the day of *Viṣṇupadī Saṁkrānti*. The Kamauli grant was made on the day of *Ekādaśī* of *Viṣṇuvatī* in *Vaiśākha*.[107] The grant of Vallabhadeva (v. 16) was made on an auspicious moment of the sun's movement. According to the Parbatīyā plates, Vanamāla donated lands to the Brāhmaṇa Cūḍāmaṇi on an auspicious day.

The above references show that orthodox Brāhmaṇical culture or true *Āryya dharma* made a strong-hold in Kāmarūpa, though some of the rites and rituals underwent appreciable changes through the process of time and coming into contact with the non-Aryan cults, which predominated in the land. This was quite natural, as the *agrahāra* settlements were situated mostly among the non-Aryans.

3. Buddhism :

It is wrongly believed, for instance, by B. K. Barua,[108] that Buddhism was not introduced into Kāmarūpa, and there are few or no indigenous images of the Buddha. The same view is held by N. N. Das Gupta who contends that the rulers of Kāmarūpa did not patronise Buddhism, and Kāmarūpa, though lying close to Bengal, remained free from the influence ot the faith.[109] R. C. Majumdar holds that "Kāmarūpa retained the Brāhmaṇical religion to the last".[110] N. K. Bhattasali opines that until

102. *Ibid.*, 210; also *Matsya Purāṇa*, 274, 289.
103. *E.I.*, XIII, pp. 289f.
104. See *M.A.S.B.*, V, p. 105.
105. Nowgong grant, V 32; Uttarbarbil plates, V 30; the grant states that the king Balavarman made the land-grant after performing rites connected with the worship of Indra : *Śakrotthāna-vidhinā*.
106. *K.S.*, p. 87 (f.n. 7).
107. *E.I.*, II, pp. 347f.
108. *Cultural History of Assam*, I, p. 161.
109. *I.H.Q.*, XXVI, pp. 333f.
110. *Ancient India*, pp. 270-71.

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the time of Yuan Chwang there was no trace of Buddhism in Assam which remained as the last strong-hold of the Brāhmaṇical religion.[111] We have examined the nature of the spread of Brāhmaṇical Hinduism in the land and have tried to show that the religious life of the people was fundamentally based on pre-Aryan or non-Aryan cults. As regards Buddhism, we shall show that long before Yuan Chwang's visit there were traces of the faith in the land. P. Bhattacharya's contention seemes to be superficial, for he asserts that neither Buddhism nor *Vajrayāna* prevailed in Kāmarūpa, and that the grants of the period indicate only a change of faith from Śaivism to Vaiṣṇavism.[112] This has been rightly criticised by A. Roy, who holds that Buddhism flourished both in Kāmarūpa and Śrīhaṭṭa.[113] Gait, though he finds "no trace of this religion in the old records and inscriptions",[114] points out on the contrary that Buddhism was wide-spread in Assam "at some previous period of its history." The latter part of his remark is based on the remains of Buddhist temples throughout Assam.[115] As L. W. Shakespear rightly points out, the faith prevailed in the land even before the introduction of Hinduism, and many old temples might have been built on the old Buddhist sites.[116] There is some truth in the belief, as done in some quarters, that Bhagadatta's family was Buddhist.[117] In any case, if Tārānātha is to be believed, Buddhism existed in that country as early as Aśvaghoṣa[118]. Before he took up the Buddhist faith, he is said to have visited lands as far as Kāmarūpa and defeated his Buddhist opponents there.[119]

An examination of the materials will show that the faith prevailed in Kāmarūpa long before Yuan Chwang's visit. The apparent reason for controversy is that Kāmarūpa is not mentioned in early Buddhist works and in the inscriptions of Aśoka; nor is it proved that land was included within his empire.[120] This conclusion is no doubt borne out by the absence of any Aśokan monument. But, we have noted that, as early as the

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111. *I.H.Q.*, XXII, p. 252.
112. *J.A.R.S.*, 1936, pp. 115f.
113. *J.A.R.S.*, IV, pp. 18-22.
114. *History of Assam*, p. 26.
115. See *A.C.R.*, 1891; also Hunter, *Statistical Account of Assam*, I, p. 39; Butler, *Sketch of Assam*, p. 134.
116. *History of Upper Assam, etc.*, pp. 71f.
117. B. Powell, *Indian Village Community*, pp. 134f; *C.R.*, 1868, pp. 77-101. The family was possibly worshipper of the Sun originally.
118. He flourished during the 2nd century A.D. (*History of Bengal*, I, 377).
119. J.C. Ghosh, *J.A.R.S.*, IV, pp. 47-48; *I.C.*, III, p. 133.
120. Majumdar, *Ancient India*, pp. 271-72.

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Nikāyas, the *Lauhitya* (*Pāli-Lohicca*) was known to the people of Mid-India as the name of the country.[121] The texts (*Dīgha Nikāya*, I, 224; *Saṁyutta Nikāya*, IV, 117) preserve the tradition of two *Lauhitya* Brāhmaṇas, one figuring as the head of a Vedic college (*Mahāśālā*) at the village of *Śālāvatī* in Kośala, which was maintained on a royal fief, and the other as residing in the kingdom of Avanti. The one was a believer in the wisdom of keeping his spiritual lore secret, and the other was opposed to the *Śramaṇa* teachers and openly abused them. The evidence proves that the Kāmarūpa Brāhmaṇas from the *Lauhitya* region had contact with the Buddhist *Śramaṇas*, though this does not definitely point to the early introduction of the latter faith in that region.

There are traditions in Tibet, Nepal, Bhutan and Assam that the the Buddha died in Kāmarūpa. On the basis of this, Waddell incorporates traditions as found in Tibetan works, which state that the *mahāparinirvāṇa* took place in west Assam in Śuālkuchi or near the Buddhist temple at Hājo.[122] This is confirmed, on the basis of *Kahgyur*, by the Hungarian traveller Csoma de Koros.[123] Shakespear, on the basis of these traditions, writes that not only the Buddha died in Kāmarūpa, but also that the Second Synod of the Buddhists was held there and that Assam was known to the Buddhists by another name, " which goes to prove that this region must in those far-off days have had a certain amount of hold on the country reaching as far as the Sadiyā district where Major Hannay states, are to be found ruins of temples of undoubted Buddhist origin".[124] The tradition may be unfounded, for it is established that the Buddha died in *Kuśinagara*[125] in modern Gorakhpur, where an image of the master was found in a reclining posture. So the *mahāparinirvāṇa* of the Buddha did not probably take place in Assam; but the Tibetan tradition may indicate that the land, known by another name possibly *Tangyur* was associated with the faith from early times. It is likely that some relics of the Buddha were carried to Assam and enshrined in a place near Gauhāti, probably at Kāmākhyā where a relic casket of stone has been found and which almost certainly contained some ashes of the Buddha, over which a *stupa* or *chaitya* was raised, or at Hājo.

According to other traditions, recorded in *Kahgyur* and *Tangyur*, the older shrine at Hājo was a great *chaitya*, erected over the cremated

121. See B.M. Barua, *I.H.Q.*, XXIII, p. 203.
122. *Buddhism of Tibet*, pp. 307f; K.L. Barua, *J.A.R.S.*, II, pp. 39f.
123. See *A. Res.*, XX, p. 295.; *Life of Buddha*, pp. 33, 49f.
124. *History of Upper* Assam, etc., pp. 73f; *C.R.*, 1867, pp. 509-532.
125. Cunningham, *Ar. S. Rep.*, I, XVIII, XXII; W. Hoey, *J.A.S.B.*, 1900, I. pp. 74f; 1901, pp. 29f.

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relics of the Buddha's body. The main image of the shrine, called *Mādhava*, is still visited by Tibetan Lāmās, who take it as *Mahāmuṇi*; the minor images are also known to them by other names. The rock, which is pointed out by the Buddhists as the cremation ground of the Buddha, and where there is the figure of a four-armed *Viṣṇu*, bears a Tibetan inscription with the famous Buddhist mantra: '*Oṁ maṇi padme huṁ*'. The holy spot is called *Tsaṃ-cho-dun* by the Lāmās. The *liṅga-yonī* symbols of the Kedāranātha are also associated with the Buddha by the Tibetan and Bhutanese pilgrims. Tārānātha mentions a great *chaitya* as being situated in Kāmarūpa; but Waddell believes that any *chaitya* erected there must be subsequent to the 7th century A.D.[126] Whatever its original significance, Hājo attained a great celebrity in *Mahāyāna* Buddhism and Buddhism of the Tibetan affiliation, and might have contained some relics of the Buddha, most likely of the saint Padmasambhava of the 7th century A.D., who probably died at Hājo, and a shrine was built over his ashes. This is supported by the mystic syllable, *maṇi padme huṁ*, *maṇi* standing for the Buddha, and *padma* for Padmasambhava. The sanctity of the place is also borne out by the fact that some monastery of Tibet is believed to have been built with clods of earth from Hājo. In fact, the place became a cosmopolitan centre of many cults, such as those of *Sūryya*, *Hayagrīva Mādhava*, the Buddha and others, and is visited even to-day by people of all faiths. The place subsequently became a great centre of Tāntrik-Buddhism, like Kāmākhyā, where also, according to traditions, stood a Buddhist shrine.[127]

Kalhaṇa states that Amṛtaprabhā (the daughter of a Kāmarūpa king of probably the 5th century A.D.), wife of Meghavāhana of Kāśmīra brought with her a Tibetan Buddhist *guru* of her father, called Stunpā, who built a *vihāra* in Kaśmīra (Lo Stunpā).[128] This monastery was also noticed by Ou Kung. Stein points out that this is based on a genuine foundation.[129] The evidence not only points to cultural relations between Kāmarūpa, Tibet and Kāśmīra, but also seems to establish the fact that about that time Buddhism was prevalent in Kāmarūpa and was patronised by its rulers. During the 6th century A.D. three Buddhist monks, from Eastern India, probabely from Kāmarūpa, Yñānabhadra, Jinayaśas and Yaśogupta, worked in China.[130]

126. Waddell, *Buddhism of Tibet*, p. 313.
127. M. Neog, *I.H.Q.*, XXVII, pp. 144f.
128. *Rājataraṅgiṇī*, III, 9-10.
129. Kalhaṇa's *Rājataraṅgiṇī*, I, pp. 81-82.
130. It is believed that the faith was carried to Burma and China via Assam: (Bagchi, *India and China*, pp. 7f. 43). It may be noted that there are strong traditions in Siam, associated with Aśoka, and that some early rulers of this land trace their origin from this king. Whatever the truth in these traditions, it is true that these along with the Buddhists migrated to Siam and other lands through Assam.

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The accounts of Yuan Chwang open a new chapter in the religious history of Kāmarūpa. The invitation sent by Bhāskara to Śīlabhadra, asking him to send the pilgrim to Kāmarūpa discloses that though he had "not yet learnt the converting power residing in the law of Buddha", he was overjoyed that this would be done through the pilgrim. Śīlabhadra at last requested the pilgrim to go to Kāmarūpa, saying that Bhāskara was earnest about the faith and "within his territories the law of Buddha has not widely extended".[131] The evidence indicates that Bhāskara had a deep respect for the faith and the pilgrim, and that the faith had at least some hold in the land. When Harṣa asked Bhāskara to send back the pilgrim, the latter refused in the beginning, but subsequently he agreed to accompany the pilgrim in his pilgrimage to *Prayāga* and Kanauj. Bhāskara's active participation in the ceremonies[132] and his association with the pilgrim and Harṣa make it clear that he had a special attachment for the faith, and possibly adopted the same. The prevalence of Buddhism also becomes clear from the pilgrim's accounts, who states that "whatever Buddhists there were in it (Kāmarūpa), performed their acts of devotion secretly."[133] Bhāskara's devotion to the faith becomes evident from his last request to the pilgrim to stay in his kingdom: "If the Master is able to dwell in my dominions—I will undertake to found one hundred monasteries on the Master's behalf".[134] It is also indicated by his offer of assistance to the Wang-Heuen-Tse mission against Arjuna,[135] and the reception of two Chinese envoys, Li-Yi-Piao and Wang-Hiuan-Tse, through whom Bhāskara asked for a portrait of Lao Tse and a Sanskrit translation of Tao-toh-king.[136] Devavarman expressed his desire to bestow the *Mṛga-śikhāvana agrahāra* near *Nālandā* to the priests from China,[137] evidently out of his respect for the faith.

Tārānātha describes how Dhītika, who succeeded Upagupta to teachership, became responsible for the spread of Buddhism in Kāmarūpa.[138] He further states that Aśvabhava preached the *Mahāyāna* cult in the land.[139] The *Taṅgyur* contains the Tibetan translation of a tract, entitled, '*dhyāna*

131. *Life of Yuan Chwang*, pp. 165f; Watters, I, p. 348.
132. *Life of Yuan Chwang*, pp. 177-78; Beal, I, p. 215.
133. Watters, II, pp. 185f; Beal, II, pp. 195f.
134. *Ibid.* According to A. Walley, Bhāskaravarman along with his ministers became a lay member of the faith : (*The Real Tripitaka*, pp. 59-60.)
135. *J.A.S.B.*, VI, p. 69; *I.A.*, IX, p. 14.
136. Bagchi, *India and China*, pp. 200f; *Pre-Aryan and Pre-Dravidian in India*, pp. 114-15.
137. *I.A.*, 1881, 109-11, 192-93; *J.R.A.S.*, 1881, pp. 558-72.
138. *I.H.Q.*, V, p. 720.
139. *History of Buddhism*, p. 199.

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sad-dharma-vyavasthāna' by Avadhūtīpāda, identified with *Ratnaśilā* of Kāmarūpa.[140] The *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* states that later Buddhism was effective in Kāmarūpa. It is noticeable that king Harṣadeva finds mention in that work. During the rule of the Śālastambha line there were Buddhist scholars in Kāmarūpa, such as Abhinavagupta, to defeat whom Śaṅkarācārya (A.D. 900) came to Kāmarūpa.[141] The evidence proves that during that time the faith had considerable hold in the land.[142] Mādhavācārya in his '*Śaṅkaravijaya*'[143] states that Kumārila was born to defeat the Buddhists and clear the path for Śaṅkarācārya to re-establish Brāhmaṇism; Buddhist scholars from Kāmarūpa found an ardent supporter in Sudhanvan, a king of the Deccan, in whose country they are said to have sustained a defeat from Kumārila, after which the king ordered the killing of all Buddhists.[144] The story is taken to be fictitious.[145] It is, however, wrong to hold, as done by P. Bhattacharya[146] that Śaṅkarācārya completely swept Buddhism out of India. Kāmarūpa, we know, became a strong-hold of later Buddhism and this happened at a time when no sharp distinction remained between Brāhmaṇical and Buddhist gods. In the Tāntrik-Buddhist days, Kāmarūpa was one of the important *pīṭhas* in Eastern India and the faith was patronised by the Pāla rulers of Assam.[147] The land became associated with quite a good number of noted *siddhas*. It is, therefore, wrong to conclude with N.N. Das Gupta that during the times of Śālastambha and Brahmapāla we do not, "come across any evidence as to any established seat of Buddhistic learning and culture anywhere in Kāmarūpa". He further wrongly states that neither epigraphy nor litera ture gives us any information of the Buddhist celebrities of the land.[148] But, as we shall see, the existing materials prove on the contrary that both *Mahāyāna* and *Vajrayāna*, and possibly *Hīnyāna* prevailed in the land, and various activities of the *Mahāyāna* preachers and *Vajrayāna siddhas* are associated with many places of Assam.

The prevalence of the faith is confirmed by a few records. The word '*dharma*' occurs in the Nidhanpur grant and the Puṣpabhadrā grant. The former states thus: "Victorious is (also) *Dharma*, the sole friend of

140. N.N. Dasgupta, *I.H.Q.*, XXVI, p. 334.
141. C.N.K. Aiyar, *Śaṅkarācārya—His Life and Times*, p. 56.
142. See *E.H.K.*, pp. 155, 160.
143. *Chap.*, I, 52, 55.
144. *Ibid.*, 93; VII, 101.
145. Aiyar, *The Three Great Ācāryas—Śaṅkarācārya*, p. 30; also R. M. Nath *J.A.R.S.*, IV, pp. 31-39.
146. *J.A.R.S.*, III, pp. 115f.
147. See S.C. Goswami, *I.H.Q.*, III, pp. 747f.
148. *I.H.Q.*, XXVI, 333-36.

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the creation—whose form is for the good of others, unseen (yet) whose existence is inferred from the results."[149] Some writers believe that the word '*dharma*' here refers to Buddhism.[150] P. Bhattacharya asserts that Bhāskara adopted the faith in order to gain popularity in *Karṇasuvarṇa*.[151] But the reference here is hardly to any faith; nor does the passage contain an invocation of *Śiva*, as suggested by N.N. Dasgupta.[152] This *dharma* stands evidently for the *Āryyadharma* which the king is said to have established by dispelling the darkness of the *Kali* age. The Puṣpabhadrā grant, (v. 7) referring to king Dharmapāla's declaration of the glory of *dharma*, states thus: "O future kings, listen to this prayer of mine; the glory of sovereignty is uncertain like the flash of lightning, and is to be shunned, but '*dharma*', the root of eternal bliss, is never to be given up". This probably indicates the influence of *Vajrayāna* upon Dharmapāla.[153] The Gauhāti grant of Indrapāla (Line 51) mentions a *śāsana* connected with '*Tathāgata*'. N. N. Das Gupta's explanation of the word as referring to a temple of the sun,[154] is wrong. As the name suggests, it is likely that near the land, donated by the king, existed a Buddhist *chaitya* over some relics of the Buddha, for which an endowment was formerly made. In the Khonāmukhi grant, Bharata is compared with *Śākya* (Buddha). The reference to the death of Vanamāla by religious suicide,[155] and the abdication of Jayamāla in favour of his son, as he considered this world to be vain and human life as a water drop,[156] may indicate that they had come under the influence of later Buddhism; because during this period (A. D. 900) the faith had already gained some ground in the land.

The prevalence of the faith is also supported by the existing ruins of temples and icons of the Buddha. Among the remains, we find traces of Buddhist temples not only at Hājo, but also at Nīlācala,[156a] Śiṅgri and Tezpur.[157] It is likely that some Hindu temples were built on the sites of

149. Nidhanpur grant, V 3.
150. *E.H.K.*, 151-52.
151. *E.I.*, XII, 71-72.
152. *I.H.Q.*, XXVI , 333-36.
153. *E.H.K.*, 152.
154. *I.H.Q.*, XXVI, 33f; also *K.S.*, p. 129 (f.n. 3.)
155. Nowgong grant, V 17.
156. *Ibid.*, VV 22-23.
156a. The so-called Tāntrik *pīṭha* of Kāmākhyā was for a considerable time a centre of *Āryyadharma*, where a royal temple, dedicated to pricipal deities like Viṣṇu, Sūryya, Brahmā, Śiva and Devī existed. There are also Buddhist remains of not only of the *Mahāyāna* and *Vajrayāna* days but also of *Hīnayāna*. The relic casket points to the early introduction of the faith.
157. Dalton, *J.A.S.B.*, XXIV, pp. 10f.

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and with the materials of old Buddhist shrines. Besides a few Buddhist icons, which we have mentioned in another connection, we have other remains in Goālpārā. One fragment of carved stone from Dekdhoā shows the engraving of a lotus or *dharmacakra* of the Buddhist. A slab of stone from Pañcaratna in Goālpārā shows similar engraving of a *dharmacakra*. The remains from Goālpārā indicate that *Vajrayāna* Buddhist temples existed there.[158] There are besides, many others belonging to the Tāntrika-Buddhist period.

4. The Solar cult :

Sun worship in Assam has a great antiquity. We have examined the possibility of the introduction of Alpine-Irānian or even Magian culture in Prāgjyotiṣa, who were largely responsible for the growth of the cult and planetary worship in the land. The antiquity of the cult is indicated by the very name Prāgjyotiṣa, which finds mention as early as the *Gṛhya Sūtras* and the *Epics*, and others like Navagraha and the Sūryya-pāhār. The prevalence of the cult is also proved by a number of existing manuscripts of the period like the one, '*Kāmarūpa nibandhanīya khaṇḍa-sādhya* of the 6th-7th century A. D. The earliest reference to Prāgj-yotiṣa as a centre of sun-worship is found in the *Gṛhya Sūtras*. The *Śāṅkhyāyana-Gṛhyasaṁgraha* states that a student should visit the sacred country of Prāgjyotiṣa before sunrise: (*tato niṣkramya Prāgjyotiṣaṁ puṇ-yadeśaṁ upāgamya anudita āditye*).[159] Here Prāgjyotiṣa is the same as the land of sunrise (*Udayācala*) of the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*. (58). *Udayā-cala* was another name of Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa, where, according to the same *Purāṇa* (109), stood a temple of the sun. The same reference is found in the *Bṛhatsaṁhitā*, based on the geography of the *Parāśara Tantra*[160] of the first century A. D.[161] The evidence proves that Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa attained celebrity in sun-worship from early times.[162] The *Varāha Purāṇa* (177, 21f) mentions *Udayācala*, *Kālapriya* and *Mūlasthāna* in connection with solar worship. This *Udayācala* was another name of *Udayādri* of Somadeva's *Kathāsaritsāgara*, and both the names stand for Prāgjyotiṣa.[163]

The *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* (66), while referring to the prevalence of the solar cult in Kāmarūpa, states that Svārocis gave to his son Vijaya

158. See S. Kataki, *J.A.R.S.*, April, 1934.
159. II, (Banaras Sans. Series).
160. Kern. *Intro. to Bṛhatsaṁhitā*, 32.
161. H.C. Chakladar, *Studies in Kāmasūtra*, p. 72.
162. J.C. Ghosh, *J.A.R.S.*, V, pp. 117-18.
163. R.C. Hazra's location of *Udayācala-Udayādri* in Orissa : (*Bhāratīya Vidyā*. IV, 212-16) is not established.

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a noble city on a hill in Kāmarūpa. In relating the story of the restoration of youth to the king Rājyavardhana, the same *Purāṇa* (109/59-61) states how the Brāhmaṇas of his kingdom went to *Guruviśāla* in Kāmarūpa where stood a temple of the sun, and the deity was worshipped by them and thereby they had their aim fulfilled. This *Guruviśāla* may be indentified with the present hillock of Garuḍācala, a place of religious importance near Hājo. On the basis of this and other good evidence, it may rightly be inferred that the solar cult had a great hold in Kāmarūpa, perhaps through the Irānian-Magian influence.[164] The *Kālikā Purāṇa*, referring to the cult, records that the Śrī Sūryya mountain in Goalpāra was the perpetual abode of the sun: (*yatra deva ādityaḥ satataṁ sthitaḥ*). The same *Purāṇa* mentions the *Citraśaila* where the nine planets (*Navagrahas*) were propitiated.[164a] We have already stated, as described by Tārānātha, who is of the opinion that the people of Kāmarūpa were formerly worshippers of the sun prior to the introduction of Buddhism by Dhītika, who had to convert the people under the pretence that he was a follower of the solar cult.[165] The *Ādicarita* (*Śaṅkaradeva*)[166] gives a description of the prevalence of the cult during the Vaiṣṇava period. The Sun worship in Assam was affiliated to the cult of *Viṣṇu* at a time when in all probability one phase of Buddhism, *Mahāyāna* was also introduced.

There are also a few references to the deity in epigraphs, though no definite invocation is found. In the Gauhāti grant occurs the expression *āditya-bhaṭṭāraka*, which no doubt stands for the sun god.[167]

The prevalence of the cult is proved by the existing remains of temples dedicated to the sun, and many icons of the deity, found in Dah Parvatīa, Gahpur, Śuālkuchi, Mangaldoi, Tezpur, Pāṇḍu, Sadiyā, Śukreśvara, Sūryyapāhār and other places of this ancient land.[168] R. D. Banerji noticed a beautiful figure of the deity in a panel from the ruins at Tezpur, and, on the basis of other remains in the area, he rightly concluded that a gigantic *Sūryya* temple existed there.[169]

The solar cults and fire worship in Assam later on came to be divested of their original meaning, and were no longer associated with the

164. See Pargiter, (*Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*); K.L. Barua, *J.A.R.S.*, V. pp. 8-14.
164a. *K.P.*, 78/42; 79/142.
165. *History of Buddhism*, p. 199; *I.H.Q.*, V, p. 720.
166. *Ādicarita* (Published by M.N. Bhattacharya).
167. *J.A.S.B.*, LVI, I, pp. 113f.
168. See Section 5.
169. *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1924-25, pp. 94f.; See also *K.S.* p. 129, f.n. 3.

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Viṣṇu cult. In some form or other, sun worship may be noticed even today not only in the harvesting rites of the tribes, but also among the people of the plains, particularly in their national festival 'Bihu', associated both with the fire cult and harvesting rites. It is significant that under the influence of Vaiṣṇavism, these festivals were given more national character than they had been before and became a part and parcel of Assamese Vaiṣṇavism, the treatment of which faith in Assam will show how intimately it is connected with the solar cult and fire worship.

5 Vaiṣṇavism:

The origin of Vaiṣṇavism in Assam is uncertain, and the antiquity of the origin of *Viṣṇu-Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa* in India is disputed. Some ascribe the origin of *Viṣṇu-Kṛṣṇa* to the Mediterranean—Dravidian element[170] and even to the stone age,[171] while others point to their non-Brāhmaṇic or non-Vedic origin.[172] Those who cling to the Dravidian origin of Vaiṣṇavism find support in the contention that the cult of *bhakti* belongs to that element.[173] Hopkins deals with the evolution of Vaiṣṇavism through successive stages, by which *Viṣṇu* came to be identified with *Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa*.[174] In any case, the worship of *Viṣṇu* is as old as the *Rig Veda*, where he is called one of the *ādityas*, and Grierson rightly holds that the *Bhāgavata* doctrine was a development of the sun worship, common to both the Irānians and Indians.[175] But, *Viṣṇu* was only a minor god during that period and Vaiṣṇavism as a faith is not found until the period of the *Mahābhārata*. There is in fact little connection between the cult of *Viṣṇu* of the *Vedas* and the *bhakti* cult or what may be called the sectarian Vaiṣṇavism of later times.[176] The name *Vāsudeva* finds mention in later Vedic literature and in Pāṇini as a name of *Viṣṇu;* the earliest reference to the *Bhāgavatas* is found in the *Brahma Sūtras*.[177] The name *Kṛṣṇa* is mentioned in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (III, 17, 6). The *Vṛṣṇi* family, to which he belonged, is mentioned in the *Brāhmaṇas*.[178] All these prove the historical character of *Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa*, who flourished during the time of the

170. *Pre-Aryan and Pre-Dravidian in India*, p. 8; Slater, *Dravidian elements in Indian culture; C.R.I.*, 1931, I, I.

171. P.T.S. Aiyangar, *Stone Age in India*, pp. 48f.

172. R.P. Chanda, *Indo-Aryan Races* pp. 99f.

173. *Camb. History of India*, I, pp. 42f; Barnett, *Antiquities of India*, pp. 4f; A.C. Das, *Rig Vedic Culture*, pp. 157f.

174. *J.R.A.S.*, 1905, 385-86; *Religions of India*, p. 431.

175. *I.A.*, 1908, p. 253; Wilson, *Intro. to the Rig Veda Saṁhitā*, p. 20.

176. H.C. Raychaudhuri, *Materials for the study of Early History of the Vaiṣṇava Sect.*, pp. 6f, 17f; R.G. Bhandarkar, *Vaiṣṇavism, Śaivism, etc.*, pp. 33f.

177. H.C. Raychaudhuri, pp. 6f; Bhandarkar, pp. 12-13.

178. Raychaudhuri, pp. 39f.

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Kuru-Pāṇḍavas, mentioned also in the Brāhmaṇical literature.[179] Even Buddhist works like the *Avadānaśataka* (1/37) mention *Nara-Nārāyaṇa-Viṣṇu*. The antiquity of the cult of *Śaṅkarṣaṇa-Vāsudeva* is also proved by epigraphs from Besnāgar and Nānāghāt of 2nd and 1st century B. C. respectively.[180] In any case, the divine character given to *Kṛṣṇa* was a later development; *Vāsudeva* had little connection with *Viṣṇu* of the *Vedas*, and the origin of sectarian Vaiṣṇavism cannot be traced to the *Viṣṇu* cult of the *Vedas*.[181] But, with the incorporation of the idea of incarnation into the system,[182] the two cults became identified under the name of Vaiṣṇavism, and with the passage of time, *Viṣṇu* of the Vedic period, *Nārāyaṇa* of the *Pañcarātras*, *Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa* of the *Satvats* and Gopāla of the *Ābhiras* came to be worshipped under the unified name of *Viṣṇu*, in and through his different manifestations.

Vaiṣṇavism was established in Assam at a time when *Sūryya* worship and Brāhmaṇical culture made considerable progress, and, as the evidence shows, the worship of both *Viṣṇu* and his incarnations was prevalent in the land from early times. The association of *Viṣṇu-Kṛṣṇa* with Prāgjyotiṣa is well-known. In the *Mahābhārata*, *Viṣṇu* is called *Prāgjyotiṣa jyeṣṭha*.[183] The *Kālikā Purāṇa* describes in detail about the worship of *Viṣṇu-Vāsudeva* with rituals (chs. 78-80,88), and mentions as many as five incarnations of the deity as being worshipped in different places of Assam. These are: *Hayagrīva*, worshipped in *Maṇikūṭa* (Hājo); Fish incarnation, worshipped in the *Matsyadhvaja* mount to the east of *Maṇikūṭa; Mādhava* in the form of *Bhairava*, named *Pāṇḍunātha* in *Rakṣakūṭa;* the Boar incarnation in the *Citravaha* mount and *Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa* in the *Dikkaravāsinī* region.[184] The *Yoginī Tantra* gives a different story of the origin of *Hayagrīva-Viṣṇu* worship, particularly in the *Maṇikūṭa*.[185] The work also describes the mode of worship in a number of *Viṣṇu-pīṭha-*

179. R.P. Chanda, *Indo-Aryan Races*, pp. 99f.

180. Lüder's *List of Brāhmī Inscriptions*, Nos. 6, 669.

181. Raychaudhuri, pp. 6f, 17f; Bhandarkar, pp. 33f; Chanda, *Indo-Aryan Races*, 99-111.

182. *Viṣṇu* in the *Vedas* is conceived as the personification of the activity of the Sun, whose passage through the three divisons of the Universe is referred to in his three steps which he took for the benefit of mankind, and his benevolence in the post-Vedic mythology must have developed into the doctrine of *Avatāras*(descent to earth), which He assumed for the good of humanity (*Vedic Age*, I, p. 367). This establishes an inseparable connection between *Viṣṇu* and the Sun god and makes the former one of the Solar deities.

183. *Śānti Parvan*, 348.

184. *K.P.*, 78-80, 88.

185. *Y.T.*, II/4,9.

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kuṇḍas, including that of *Pāṇḍunātha-Viṣṇu: (Lauhitye vidhivat snātvā pāṇḍunāthaṁ prapūjayet* (II/6).) The mode of worship of *Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa* in the *Kālikā Purāṇa* (83/141) is almost similar to the rules laid down in the *Pañcarātra Saṁhitās*.[186] The *Varāha Purāṇa* states that in the Himalayas there was a temple of *Kokāmukhasvāmin*, the abode of *Viṣṇu*, which contained his best shrine and image. The *Brahma Purāṇa* (144-15) states that Naraka, the lord of Prāgjyotiṣa was born in the *Kokāmukha-tīrtha*.[187] In fact, the story of the birth of Naraka through the Boar incarnation of *Viṣṇu*, as given in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* (Bk. I,V) and other sources, and the claim of the rulers of ancient Assam to trace their descent from him, point to an early belief in the incarnation of the god, whether in the form of *Kṛṣṇa* or any other form; this idea of incarnation is as old as the *Rig Veda* (VII, 100, 6).[188] The association of *Kṛṣṇa* with the story of Bāṇa and Bhiṣmaka also points to an early belief in the divine character of the god. Yuan Chwang states that Bhāskara was descended from *Nārāyaṇadeva* (*Viṣṇu*).[189] Bāṇa in his *Harṣacarita* describes that king as belonging to the Vaiṣṇava family (*Vaiṣṇavavaṁśa*).[190] The *Epics* and the *Purāṇas* also show that Bhagadatta had a particular devotion to *Kṛṣṇa*. This is confirmed by the Tezpur grant of Vanamāla (v. 5).

The antiquity of the cult of *Viṣṇu* in one of his incarnations is associated with the *Hayagrīva-Mādhava* worship in Hājo. The horse cult in fact is found in the worship of *Dadhikrā* or *Agni* in the form of a horse in the texts, which later on came to be identified with the *Hayagrīva-Mādhava*.[191] This incarnation is described in the *Mahābhārata* and the *Purāṇas*, and its worship originated in the worship of *Agni* or the sun. The *Matsya Purāṇa* (53) relates that this incarnation preceded even the *Matsyāvatāra*. The *Śānti Parvan* (347) shows that *Viṣṇu* assumed the *Hayagrīva* form to recover the *Vedas* from the demons *Madhu* and *Kaiṭabha*. According to other accounts and the *Purāṇas*, like the *Kālikā* (78/78), it was *Viṣṇu*, in his *Hayagrīva* form, who killed the demon *Jvarāsura* on the *Maṇikūṭa*, where stood a temple of *Hayagrīva Viṣṇu*. According to another version, *Viṣṇu* killed *Hayagrīva* near Viśvanātha and then migrated to *Maṇikūṭa*.[192] The *Harivaṁśa* (64) states that *Kṛṣṇa*, after killing

186. Kākati, *Mother Goddess Kāmākhyā*, pp. 74-75. It is significant to point out that a *Śākta* element was introduced in the worship of *Vāsudeva*. (J.N. Farquhar, *An Out-line of the religious Literature of India*, pp. 183-86).

187. *Chap.* 140, VV 72, 75.

188. Macdonell, *J.R.A.S.*. 1895, p. 188.

189. Watters, II, pp. 185f.

190. *H.C.* (Cowell), pp. 211f.

191. J.C. Ghosh, *J.A.R.S.*, V, pp. 79f. *Hayagrīva* is also an incarnation of the Buddha according to the Tibetan work *Kahgyur*.

192. *K.P.*, 80/23-25.

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Naraka, *Niṣuṇḍa* and *Hayagrīva*, went to *Maṇikūṭa* or *Maṇiparvata*. The *Padma Purāṇa* (47, 36) describes the *Hayagrīva śālagrāma*, and the *Garuḍa Purāṇa* (34) gives the mode of worship of *Hayagrīva*, which was but a mixture of the Paurāṇic and Tāntrik faiths. In the *Skanda Purāṇa* (xiv-xv) and the *Devī Purāṇa* the story of the origin of the *Hayagrīva* incarnation is given; an almost similar story is narrated in the *Vāmana Purāṇa*, *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* (ix, 2) and other texts, where *Viṣṇu* is said to have taken the head of a horse in the *Bhadrāśvavarṣa*. We know that the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* (58-59) and the *Vāyu Purāṇa* (45) include *Mandara*, *Karatoyā*, *Lauhitya* and *Prāgyjotiṣa* in *Bhadrāśvavarṣa*. The *Vāyu Purāṇa* (36) again attributes the name of *Bhadrāśva* to the white horse of *Viṣṇu*, meaning the *Hayagrīva* incarnation. In the Buddhistic accounts *Bhadrāśva* is replaced by the name *Pūrvavideha*,[193] and the limits of *Bhadrāśva* include the regions from Videha to Lohita. The *Kālikā Purāṇa* includes the *Karatoyā* region within Kāmarūpa. The evidence proves that Kāmarūpa formed part of *Bhadrāśva*, and that the *Hayagrīva* worship of *Viṣṇu*, originally associated with *Agni*, was prevalent in the land, at least in the temple at Hājo and probably at Kāmākhyā.[194] Whatever the antiquity of the cult of *Hayagrīva Mādhava*, it is certain that it had its Tāntrik-Buddhist affiliation, as shown by the *Purāṇas* and the *Tantras*.[194a]

Of the inscriptions of the period, the earliest reference to *Viṣṇu* worship is found in the *Baḍgaṅgā* epigraph of Bhūtivarman (A.D. 553-54) and the king is here mentioned as '*Paramadaivata-Paramabhāgavata*'.[195] Bhāskara is said to have been created by (Brahmā), the holy lotus, issuing from the navel of *Viṣṇu*, (Nidhanpur grant, L. 34). Ratnapāla is compared with *Rāma*, *Kṛṣṇa*, *Puruṣottama* and *Janārdana*, (Gauhāti grant, v. 9; Bargāon grant, L. 46). The assumption of the epithet '*Vārāha*' by that king, (Gauhāti grant), like Harṣapāla (Khonāmukhi grant, L. 10) and Dharmapāla (Puṣpabhadrā grant), points to the fact that they were devoted to *Viṣṇu*. All the records of the period refer to the Boar incarnation of *Viṣṇu*, (Nidhanpur grant, v. 4; Tezpur grant, vv. 3-4; Puṣpadhadrā grant, v. 1), but also of *Hari* (Gauhāti grant, vv. 4-5; Bargāon grant, v. 3; Nidhan-

193. Watters, I, pp. 31-36.
194. J.C. Ghosh, *J.A.R.S.*, V, pp. 79-85.
194a. Dalton remarked that the *Hayagrīva* image of Hājo, covered with cloths and mask, is really that of the Buddha. The existence of a Buddhist shrine there is also believed to have been confirmed by the images of elephants, engraved at the base of the present *Maṭha*, which are similar to those of the *Kailāsa* temple at Ellora caves : (*J.A.S.B.* LXI p. 37).
195. Lines 1-2. If the recently discovered rock inscription at *Kāmākhyā*, attributed to Surendravarman has a bearing on the worship of *Viṣṇu*, the prevalence of the faith may be pushed back to a century earlier.

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pur grant, v. 19), *Upendra* (Nowgong grant, v. 3), *Nārāyaṇa* (Khonāmukhi grant, v. 2), *Achyuta* (Guākuchi grant), *Kṛṣṇa* (Tezpur grant, vv. 4-5) and others. But, there is no particular invocation of *Viṣṇu*, except in the Puṣpabhadrā grant of Dharmapāla, which opens with an invocation of the Boar incarnation. The contention of P. Bhattacharya that Dharmapāla embraced Vaiṣṇavism at the time of the issue of the grant,[196] is doubtful. The name Dharmapāla is, however, mentioned by the biographer of Śaṅkaradeva in association with the faith.[197] The donee of the said grant is mentioned as the worshipper of the lotus feet of *Mādhava* from his birth: (*Yo bālyataḥ prabhṛti Mādhavapādapadma pūjā prapañca racanāṁ suciraṁ*), (Puṣpabhadrā grant, v. 18). Records also mention different consorts of *Viṣṇu*, such as *Lakṣmī*, whose perpetual abode is in the bosom of *Nārāyaṇa* (Nidhanpur grant, vv. 17, 19); she is also the goddess of wealth and splendour; she is *Śrī*, *Kamalanivāsinī* (Hāyuṅthāl grant), *Kamalā*, *Bhāratī* (Śubhaṅkarapāṭaka grant, v.9), *Śyāmā* (Nowgong grant, v. 20), *Sarasvatī* (Śubhaṅkarapāṭaka grant, v. 9) and many others. She is said to have been favourably disposed towards the rulers.

The worship of *Viṣṇu* and his incarnations is also proved by epigraphy. We have already mentioned that the *Purāṇas* point to the worship of *Mādhava*, *Vāsudeva*, *Varāha*, *Hayagrīva*, *Nārāyaṇa* and the like, and that epigraphs make particular mention of the Boar incarnation. The other incarnations are *Paraśurāma*, 'who washed his blood-stained axe in the water of the *Lauhitya*' (Gauhāti grant, v. 13); *Narasiṁha* and *Rāma* (Guākuchi grant), 'who crossing the ocean killed *Rāvaṇa*' (Gauhāti grant, v. 9; Kamauli grant, v. 4); and *Kṛṣṇa* (Gauhāti grant, v. 9; Tezpur grant, vv. 3-5), who was the most popular of all incarnations. Epigraphs also mention the sportive *Bālakṛṣṇa* or *Gopāla* who was brought up by *Yaśodā* (Guākuchi grant, v. 24) and was the delight of the *Gopīs* (Tezpur grant, v. 13). Some writers hold that even the personal names of persons, such as Vanamāla and those of the Brāhmaṇas like *Mādhava*, *Keśava*, etc., indicate faith in *Viṣṇu*.[198] But, such conclusions are inconclusive, because the name of a person has little to do with any particular faith, Vanamāla himself was devoted to *Śiva* (Nowgong grant, v. 12).

We have extensive archaeological remains of temples dedicated to *Viṣṇu* and his incarnations and icons of the deity throughout Assam.[199]

196. *K.S.*, p. 170.,

197. R.M. Nath, *J.A.R.S.*, 1938, pp. 23f. This Dharmapāla may have been a different person. We have more than one Dharmapāla in our chronicles. The Pāla rulers flourished at a time when *Vajrayāna* made a great strong-hold in the land. Dharmapāla of our grants, however, had respect for all the extant faiths in an equal degree, though he might have been a devotee of *Vajrayāna*.

198. B.K. Barua, *Cultural History of Assam*, I, p. 150.

199. See Section 5.

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The remains show that beginning at least with the 5th and 6th century A.D.[200] *Viṣṇu* was worshipped in his iconographic representations, and Vaiṣṇavism was widespread in the land.

Both literary[201] and archaeological sources, therefore, point to the conclusion that the worship of *Viṣṇu* and his incarnations was established in the land from early times. Hence it is wrong to hold that the faith had its origin in Assam only with the Vaiṣṇava reformers, though it is true that the Neo-Vaiṣṇavism of Śaṅkaradeva and Mādhavadeva differed a great deal from the earlier system, based on Tāntrik rites. But, having its origin in the solar cult of the Alpine-Irānians and Magians, the cult was gradually developed into the worship of *Viṣṇu* and his incarnations, under the Brāhmaṇical influence that was responsible for the *Bhāgavatism* of the Gupta period.[202] With the extinction of Pāla rule in Assam during the 12th century A.D., and while the Tāntrik-Buddhist system became strong, there was a period of chaos in the land, marked by revolting rites, until these were temporarily suppressed by the Vaiṣṇava reformers. It is remarkable, however, that many Tāntrik-Buddhist rites have crept also into the different phases of Neo-Vaiṣṇavism of later times through a process of absorption. It is also to be admitted that Vaiṣṇava preachings and the *satras*, established by the reformers, have fundamentally been based on those of the Buddhists of an earlier period.[203]

6. Origin of Śaktism and Tāntrikism—worship of Śiva and Devī :

The cult of fertility or the worship of the phallus, *liṅga* and *yonī*, personified later on as *Śiva* and the Mother Goddess or *Devī*, which formed the basis of Śaktism and Tāntrikism, is found not only in the prehistoric finds, such as Neoliths[204] and Megaliths which are so extensive in Assam, but also from the Indus valley remains[205] and Vedic literature.[206] The cult is to be associated with the pre-Aryan element; even the word *liṅga* has been attributed to an Austric origin.[207] Phallic worship definitely

200. K.N. Dikshit, *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1922-23, pp. 119f; *Ibid*, 1928-29, pp. 45f.
201. *Kāmarūpar Burañjī*, (ed S.K. Bhūyan), pp. 118-132.
202. H.C. Raychaudhuri, *Early History of the Vaiṣṇava Sect*, p. 104
203. S.C. Goswami, *I.H.Q.*, III, pp. 747f; R. M. Nath *J.A.R.S.*, 1938, pp. 23f; *Ibid*, IV, pp. 36f.
204. B. Foote, *Prehistoric and Protohistoric Antiquities*, pp. 20f, 61; Aiyangar, *Stone Age*, pp. 48f; K.R. Subranian, *Origin of Śaivism and History in the Tamil land*, p. 23.
205. Marshall, *Mahenjodaro and Indus Valley Civilisation*, I, pp. 52-6, 66-67; Mackay, *Further Excavations at Mahenjodaro*, I, pp. 265, 336; *Excavations at Harappa*, I, pp. 42, 304; Dikshit, *Prehistoric Civilisation of the Indus Valley*, pp. 32f.
206. J.N. Banerjea, *Dev. of Hindu Iconography*, pp. 47, 69.
207. *Pre-Aryan and Pre-Dravidian*, p. 8; *C.R.I.*, 1931, I, I, pp. 236f, 392f.

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formed part of the religious life of the non-Aryans and Aryans in Assam. The *Śakti* as a cosmic energy, personified as a female, is one of the oldest faiths in India, and some of the names of the goddess like *Durgā*, *Kālī*, and *Umā* occur in the Vedic literature.[208] But, it is almost certain that Śaktism had a non-Vedic origin and *Umā* or *Kālī* was probably a female mountain ghost, which was later on identified with the wife of *Rudra*, or brought into line with the Brāhmaṇic thoughts.[209] Even *Rudra* is called *Girīśa* (mountain god). The names like *Umā* and *Durgā* of the Vedic literature can hardly be identified with *Devī* or *Śakti* of the Śakta faith.[210] But, with the development of the faith, these names of the goddess, whether Hindu or Buddhist in origin, came to be taken as manifestations of the same female principle of *Devī*, like her consort *Rudra*, *Śiva* or *Mahādeva*, known under various names. As the following treatment will show Śaktism had a stronghold in Assam from early times, contributed more by the non-Aryans than the Aryans.

Tāntrikism is also definitely of non-Aryan origin.[211] All its elements —the use of magic and charms, the revolting rites, the use of wine, the belief in the efficacy of *mantras* and sex worship are found in other primitive cultures all the world over,[212] and the high antiquity of the cult is pointed out by all. The Aryans only systematised it.[213] Some elements of the faith are found not only in the *Atharva Veda* but also in the *Rig Veda* and in other religious and secular works.[214] According to the *Kaulārṇava Tantra* (II, 10) even the revolting *Kaula* rites are represented as being the essence of the Vedas. The origin of *mantra*, *yantra* and *cakra* is, therefore, to be traced back to the Vedas.

The *Tantras* are broadly divided into orthodox and heterodox, the former including the *Āgamas* and the *Yāmalas* with their supplements and the latter, both Hindu and Buddhistic, are represented by different schools of *Kulācāra*, *Vāmācāra*, *Sahayāna*, *Vajrayāna*, etc. P.C. Bagchi points out that the mystic character of the latter was due to a foreign element, and that, while Mid-India was the centre of the orthodox system, outer India was that of the heterodox one , of which the famous centres were *Kāmarūpa*,

208. Jacobi, *E.R.E.*, V, p. 217.
209. Chanda, *Indo-Aryan Races*, pp. 148f, 153-56.
210. *Indo-Aryan Races*, 123-25; Jacobi, *E.R.E.*, II, p. 813.
211. Quaritch Wales, *The Making of Greater India*, p. 122.
212. Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, II, pp. 410f; Spencer, *Sociology*, I, 262f; Frazer, *Golden Bough*, I, p. 10f; *E.R.E.*, III, pp. 392f; E.H. Hartland, *E.R.E.*, IX, pp. 815-31.
213. C. Chakravarti, *I.H.Q.*, VI, pp. 114-126; M. Bose, *Post-Chaitanya Sahajia Cult of Bengal* (Cal. University), pp. 98f.
214. *I.H.Q.*, VI, pp. 114-126; S. Śāstrī, *I.A.*, 1906, pp. 274f.

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Pūrṇagiri, *Oḍḍiyāna* and *Jālandhara*. Most of the writers on the subject belive in the foreign origin of Tāntrikism.[215] H.P. Sāstrī quotes from the *Kubjikā Tantra*[216] to show its foreign origin. The *Tārā Tantra* states that the cult of *Cīna Tārā* came from *Mahācīna*. Levi finds in *Cīna Tārā* an echo of secret societies in China.[217] *Māhācīna Tārā* is identified with *Ekajaṭā* whose cult is said to have been taken by Nāgārjuna from Tibet.[218] In The *Sanmoha Tantra*, found in Nepal, the same origin of the *Mahācīna Tārā* is given, and it is stated that *Ugratārā* was born in *Cīnadeśa*. A number of Tāntrik centres from outside India find mention in the same work, which include Tibet, Nepal, Bhutan, Mahācīna, Media, Persia, etc., along with the non-Aryan centres from Southern India.[219]

But Tāntrikism has been intimately associated with Kāmarūpa-Kāmākhyā, the *Mahāpīṭha* of the *Tantras* and the *Purāṇa*s (*K.P.*, 51/64) from early times.[219a] As Hutton believes, it probably originated with the incorporation into Hinduism of a fertility cult which preceded the faith in Assam as the religion of the country.[220] It is also believed that the cult travelled from Assam and Bengal to Dravidian India.[221] Some attribute the origin of the faith to Orissa or Bengal rather than to Assam.[222] As N.L. Dey writes, the Tāntrik faith as an offshoot of later Buddhism developed about the 9th century A.D. under the Pālas of Gauḍa. The Buddhist university of *Vikramaśilā*, founded by Dharmapāla became a famous centre of the Tāntrik faith, whence it spread to Kāmarūpa.[223] Wilson believes "that Assam, or at least the north-east of Bengal, seems to have been in a great degree the source from which the Tāntrik and Śākta corruption of the religion of the *Vedas* and *Purāṇas* proceeded."[224] Eliot holds the same view.[225] It may be that some elements of the faith had a foreign origin,

215. See B. Bhattacharya, *I.H.Q.*, III, pp. 733-46; *E.R.E.*, VI, pp. 705f.
216. *Cat. of Mss. from Nepal*, 1905, LXXIX.
217. Nepal, I, pp. 346f.
218. *I.H.Q.*, VI, pp. 484f; *Sādhanāmālā* (No. 127).
219. P.C. Bagchi, *I.H.Q.*, VII, pp. 1-16.
219a. The celebrity of Kāmākhyā in Kāmarūpa as a *pīṭha* goes back to tne *Mahābhārata, Vana Parvan:* III, 82, 83-85, 93-95, 151-53, which mentions two *yonīkuṇḍas* and one *stana kuṇḍa*. The former two are in Pañcanada and Udyantaparvata respectively and the last one is on the *Gaurīśikhara*, which is located in Kāmarūpa by the work *Pīṭhanirṇaya*, and it stands for Kāmākhyā : (D.C. Sircar, The *Śākta Pīṭhas*, pp. 8-9).
220. *Man in India*, VIII, pp. 228-32.
221. S.C. Roy, *Man in India*, XIV, p. 92.
222. K.L. Barua, *E.H.K.*, pp. 157-58.
223. *J.P.A.S.B.*, (N.S.) X, p. 346.
224. *Preface to the Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, LXII.
225. *J.R.A.S.*, 1910, pp. 1153f.

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but that Assam was one of the great centres of Tāntrikism, is proved by the *Tantras* themselves. It is quite likely that this land, with her non-Aryan elements, contributed to the origin and growth of the system, and we need not go to Orissa, Bengal or elsewhere to account for its introduction. It is associated more with the non-Aryans than the Aryans, and the Alpines or the Magians perhaps greatly contributed to its development in Kāmarūpa-Kāmākhyā.[226] The Austric and the Tibeto-Burmans, as shown by the phallic megalithic remains, really laid the foundation of the system, the final form of which was given by the assimilation of both Hindu and Buddhistic ideas. In short, the origin and later growth of some of the important elements of Tāntrikism are to be attributed to the non-Aryans in ancient Assam, one of the fertile fields in Eastern India for the development of those ideas.

(i) *Worship of Śiva:* The worship of *Śiva* in his different manifestations, and both in his phallic and iconographic representations, has a great antiquity in Assam. This is shown by literature and archaeology. The *Kālikā Purāṇa* mentions fifteen centres of the faith[227] and describes that before the introduction of *Devī* worship in Kāmākhyā by Naraka, *Śiva* was recognised as the guardian deity of the land, which was his own domain: (*sa ca deśaḥ svarājyārthe pūrvaṁ guptaśca Śambhūnā*).[228] Even during the time of Naraka, *Śiva* is said to have remained concealed within his own city: (*Śambhūrantar-guptaḥ sa me pure*); the deity lived always with *Pārvatī: sadā sannihitastatra pārvatyā saha śaṁkaraḥ*.[229] and he was worshipped by the *Kirātas*.[230]

Traces of the faith are found among Tibeto-Burman tribes, such as the Koches. The faith was perhaps popular among them, and even among the Khāsis, who were the authors of some ancient megaliths of Assam. As we have shown, the worship of the principles of procreation, representing *Śiva* and his consort, is to be attributed to the non-Aryan in the land. The *Skanda Purāṇa* relates how the king Jalpa became a *Śiva* worshipper.[231] It is believed to have been introduced by Jalpeśvara from Jalpāiguri, who also built a temple of the same name there.[232] But, as we have stated, the faith prevailed in the land even before Naraka. Bāṇa in his *Harṣacarita* refers to Bhāskara's devotion to 'the lotus-feet of

226. Spooner, *J.R.A.S.*, 1915, II, p. 435.
227. *K.P.*, Chaps., 81, 82.
228. *Chapter* 38/96.
229. *Ibid*, 51/64.
230. See Kākati, *Mother Goddess Kāmākhyā*, pp. 15f.
231. *Chapter* 66.
232. G. Barua, *Asam Burañjī*, pp. 39, 45-46.

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Śiva'.[233] The *Yoginī Tantra* mentions the worship of the deity in his *linga* form.[234] It (I/1,5;II/4, 6,8,9) refers also to a number of *pīṭhas* where *Śiva* was worshipped under different names. According to the *Purāṇas*, Bāṇa and his family were great devotees of *Śiva*.[235]

Epigraphs refer to the worship of the deity and the erection of *Śiva* temples. Vanamāla repaired the fallen lofty temple of *Heṭuka Śūlin* (*Śiva*) (Tezpur grant, v. 24). Ratnapāla 'studded the earth with white-washed temples enshrining *Śambhū*,' (Gauhāti grant, v. 10). The grant of Vallabhadeva refers to a temple of *Mahādeva* (v. 13). Bhagadatta, who was so devoted to *Kṛṣṇa*, worshipped *Śiva* with penance (Tezpur grant, v. 5). Vajradatta had an unblemished faith in *Śiva* (Nowgong grant, v. 8). The Doobi grant begins with an invocation to *Śiva* in his concrete form: He "is lovely with the moon as the headgear, the holder of the bow, decorated with particles of ashes" (v. 1). The same grant describes Bhāskara as a follower of the doctrine of *Mahādeva* (v. 55). The Nidhanpur grant describes *Śiva's* concrete manifestation (v. 2). In the Tezpur Rock inscription, Harjjara is described as a *Paramamāheśvara*, (L. 2). That Vanamāla had a faith in *Śiva*, is shown by his erection of a *Śiva* temple (Tezpur grant, v. 24). His Tezpur grant opens with an invocation to the god: "May *Śiva*, on whom the waters of *Gaṅgā* cast up by the wind are, as it were, the stars on the firmament, sanctify you" (v. 2). In the Nowgong grant, Vanamāla is described as having great faith in *Bhāva* (v. 12). The grant opens with an invocation to *Rudra* (v. 1). The Bargāon grant gives a description of *Śiva's tāṇḍava* dance, stating that the water of the *Lauhitya* was made beautiful by the reflection falling on it from the dancing figure of *Śaṅkara* who was engaged in marking quick time music in his primeval form, who assumed numberless forms for the welfare of the world (vv. 1-2). The reference shows that *Śiva* was conceived as a benefactor of all and a supreme lord in his concrete form. The Gauhāti grant opens with an invocation to *Śambhū* and *Paśupati* along with the consorts *Gaurī* and *Gaṅgā* (v. 1). *Śiva* was also identified with *Viṣṇu*: "May *Paśupati* be glorious, the lord of the creation (who is) the famous great Boar of a wonderful bodily form and she also the Earth, the mother of him (Naraka)" (*Ibid*, v. 2). In the grants of Dharmapāla, *Śiva* is conceived, probably under the influence of Tāntrik-Buddhism, as the embodiment of two unifying principles, called *Ardhayuvatīśvara* (Khonāmukhi grant, v. 1; Śubhaṅkarapāṭaka grant, v. 1). The *Kālikā Purāṇa* (45/116-78) describes the origin of this aspect of the deity when

233. *H.C.* (Cowell), p. 217.
234. I, XI, V 36. Kāmākhyā is *Koṭīlinga-samākīrṇā* (II/4).
235. *Viṣṇu* P., I, XXI; V, XXXIIf; *Kumāra-Haraṇa*.

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Kālī or *Girijā* entered into the body of *Śiva*. The Kamauli grant states that *Śiva* was worshipped by the Brāhmaṇa Śrīdhara undergoing penance and starvation (v. 20).

Epigraphy further testifies to the widespread prevalence of the faith and the worship of *Śiva* in his different mythological manifestations. He was also conceived both in his abstract and concrete forms, to some of which we have already made reference. The concrete representation will also be evident from the study of his sculptures. As has already been indicated, he stood both for creation and destruction, explained by his various names. He is *Ādideva* (Khonāmukhi grant, v. 1), *Paramamāheśvara* (Tezpur Rock Ins. L. 2), *Maheśvara* (Doobi grant, v. 55; Nidhanpur grant, v. 2), *Īśvara* (Tezpur grant), *Mahādeva* (grant of Vallabhadeva, v. 13), *Śiva* (Tezpur grant, v. 5; Kamauli grant v. 20), *Mahāvarāha* (Gauhati grant); *Prajādhināthа* (*Ibid*), *Śambhū* (*Ibid*, v. 10), *Śaṅkara* (Bargāon grant, vv. 1-2), *Paśupati* (Gauhati grant, vv. 1-2), *Bhāva* (Nowgong grant, v. 12), *Īśa* (Ibid v. 8), *Pinākapāṇi* (Doobi grant, v. 1; Tezpur grant, v. 2), *Rudra* (Nowgong grant, v. 1), *Heṭuka Śūlin* (Tezpur grant, v. 24), *Gaurīpati* (Grant of Vallabhadeva), *Hara* (Bargāon grant), *Kāmeśvara* (Tezpur grant; Guākuchi grant), *Padmanātha* (Kamauli grant, v. 26), *Kitava* (Gauhāti grant, v. 1) *Ardhanārīśvara* (Khonāmukhi grant, v. 1; Śubhaṅkarapāṭaka grant, v. 1) and others.

The worship of *Śiva* in his various forms is confirmed by the extensive ruins of temples and icons of the deity, found throughout the State. The evidence shows that as early as the 5th century A. D., if not earlier, he was worshiped by his iconographic representations in temples and the faith was popular among all classes of people.

(ii) *Worship of Devī:* We have already discussed the origin of Śaktism and Tāntrikism of a later time. That Kāmarūpa was an important centre of *Devī* worship both in her symbolic and iconographic representations under various names, and along with her companion *Śiva*, is provted by literature and archaeology. The extant *Purāṇas* point to the antiquity of the cult, connected with the worship of Kāmākhyā or *Yoni pīṭha* of the *Tantras*, enshrined in the temple at *Nīlācala*, where the genital organ of *Satī* is believed to have fallen.[235a] The tradition is described in detail in the *Devī Purāṇa*, the *Kālikā Purāṇa* (64/59), the *Yoginī Tantra* and

235a. The story is absolutely mythical. It only recalls the Buddhist traditions of the remains of the Buddha having been enshrined under *stupas* in different parts of the country : (see Louis Renou, *Journal Asiatique*, 1950, pp. 427-29).

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other works.[236] The *Devī Purāṇa* (39/14; 42/9) states that the *Devī* was worshipped in her different forms in centres like Kāmarūpa, Kāmākhyā, Bhoṭṭadeśa and other lands. The Austric formation of the names, Kāmākhyā and Kāmarūpa indicates that the deity was formerly a goddess of spirits or ghosts, who were worshipped in a cremation ground.[237] The *Y. T.* (1/11) confirms this, according to which Kāmākhyā is the *Kālī-śmaśāna*. It is possible that the *Yonī* goddess migrated to Assam with the migration of Austrics or the matriarchal tribes like the Khāsis and the Gāros and that Naraka became responsible for the foundation of the *Devī* worship in Kāmākhyā; the *Kālikā Purāṇa* (38/44) enjoyed upon Naraka to propitiate no other deity than Kāmākhyā; but with his death, Kāmākhyā was no longer the Mother Goddess, the companion of *Viṣṇu*, but became the amorous wife *Pārvatī* of *Śiva*. Subsequently *Pārvatī* was assimilated into the virgin goddess of sex and beauty, *Tripurā*. The cults of virgin goddess and of the sexual aspect of *Devī* worship seem to have been derived from the cult of *Tripurā*.[238] The *Purāṇas* and the *Tantras* also state that Naraka was placed in charge of *Kāmākhyā*; and, as B. K. Kākati rightly remarks, the word Kāmarūpa (Kāmākhyā) symbolises a new cult, and in exaltation of it the land itself was rechristened. The very names Kāmarūpa—Kāmākhyā, therefore, suggest that the cult is derived from some Austric divinity.[239] The Alpines had perhaps their part to play in the later development of the cult, which received new orientation when they came into contact with the Śāktas. It was natural that Kāmarūpa, where non-Aryans were numerically predominant, constituted one of the famous centres of *Śakti* worship. The Brāhmaṇical Hinduism also played its part. We have already made it clear that the foundation of both Śaktism and Tāntrikism was laid largely by the megalithic culture of the tribes of Assam.

As early as Kālidāsa[240] we find mention of *Hemapīṭha*, standing for Kāmarūpa-Kāmākhyā.[241] The *Kāmapīṭha* of the *Tantras* was no other than Kāmarūpa and Kāmākhyā.[241a] Among texts composed in Assam,

236. According to the *Y.T.*, *Kāmākhyā* is the same as *Kālī*, the eternal in the form of *Brahma* (I/15). It stands for *navayonī*, worshipped even by Brahma and Viṣṇu. (1/11).

237. Kākati, *Assamese—Its Formation and Development*, pp. 53f; *N.I.A.*, I, pp. 1-23; also *Mother Goddess Kāmākhyā*, pp. 40f. This cremation ground may possibly be associated with a centre where Buddhist remains were enshrined.

238. *Mother Goddess Kāmākhyā*, pp. 43f; *K.P.*, 66/50; *Y.T.*, 1/17/31.

239. *Ibid*, pp. 35f.

240. *Raghuvaṁśa*, IV, 81-84.

241. J. C. Ghosh, *J.A.R.S.*, V, pp. 117-18

241a. In the *Kālikā Purāṇa* (62/76; 76/75) it is called *Kubjikā pīṭha* as well as *Kāmākhyā*, worship of which along with her *māhātmya* is described in ritualistic details in different sections of the *Purāṇa*.

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the *Ācārya Sāmhitā*, based on the *Sūta Samhitā* and the *Rudrayāmala Tantra*, contains a dialogue between *Śiva* and *Pārvatī*.[242] The *Garuḍa Purāṇa* (89) mentions both Kāmarūpa and Kāmākhyā as great places of pilgrimage; (*Kāmarūpam mahātīrtham Kāmākhyā tatra tiṣṭhati*). The worship of the deity is also proved by the fact that Kāmarūpa is included among countries having *Devī* worship. It finds mention in *Ṣaṭpañcaṣad-deśa-vibhāga*', based on the *Śaktisamgama Tantra*. Similar divisions are found in the *Chandragarbha Sūtra* of Narendrayaśa (A. D. 566) and the *Sanmoha Tantra*.[243] The *Kāmarūpa Yātrā*, based on the *Yoginī Tantra*, the *Kālikā Purāṇa* and the *Kaulārṇava*, deals with the rules in connection with the pilgrimage to Kāmākhyā. The *Tikṣakalpa* deals with the mode of the worship of *Tārā*. The *Kāmākhyā Tantra* mentions the glory of the *Śakti* faith. The *Yoginī Tantra*, the *Hara-Gaurī-Samvāda* and other *Tantras* give detailed accounts of the *Devī* worship. The latter work mentions four important centres of Tāntrik worship, such as *Ratnapīṭha*, *Kāmapīṭha*, *Svarṇapīṭha* and *Saumārapīṭha*. The worship of Kāmākhyā in *Kāmakūṭa* or *Nīlācala* was the most important of all. In the *Kālikā Purāṇa*, the worship of no other deity than Kāmākhyā is enjoined.[244] The temple at Kāmākhyā, therefore, has the reputation of the worship of the *Devī* with numerous Tāntrik rites and sacrifices, the details of which are given in the *Kālikā Purāṇa* and also in the *Yoginī Tantra*.[245] *Kumārī-pūjā* and the worship of the various aspects of *Śakti* constitute but a part and parcel of the same faith, as given in the *Yoginī Tantra* (1/13; II/7-9). Both this work and the *Kālikā Purāṇa* (60-61) describe also the cult of *Mahiṣāmardinī Durgā*.

The temple of *Tāmreśvarī* (copper temple) at Sadiyā was another noted centre of Devī worship in a different form, but with thesame bloody sacrifices, even of human beings. She was the same goddess as *Dikkaravāsinī* of the *Tantras*, *Y.T.* (II/I) and *Purāṇas* (*K.P.*, 80/39). She assumed two forms : *Tīkṣṇa-Kāntā* (fearful appearance) and *Lalitā-Kāntā* (graceful appearance). The former was *Ekajaṭā* (single matted hair) and was known as *Ugratārā*, with her attendants, such as *Cāmuṇḍā*, *Vikalā*, *Bhīṣaṇā*, etc.[246] The worship of the Tantrik-Buddhist goddess *Ugratārā* wasestablishedin Kāmarūpa in the *Ugratārā* temple during the time of the Pāla rulers.[247]

242. *Report on the Progress of Historical Research in Assam*, 1897.

243 D. C. Sircar, *I.C.*, VIII, pp. 33-64.

244. *K.P.*, 83/39., 51. The *Purāṇa* also describes the *Kāmākhyāpīṭha māhātmya* (81).

245. See *A. Res.*, V, pp. 371f; *E.R.E.*, VI, pp. 849f; Blochmann, *J.A.S.B.*, XLII, pp. 240f.

246. S. Lévi, *Nepal*, I, pp. 346f; P. C. Bagchi, *I.H.Q.*, VII, pp. 1-16; VI, pp. 485f.

247. K.L. Barua, *J.A.R.S.*, II, pp. 44-51. See *K.P.* (81/16f) for the worship of the *Ugratārā* aspect of *Śakti*.

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The place is traditionally associated with the *Nābhipīṭha*. In the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* (v.900) Kāmarūpa is mentioned as a *pīṭha* where the worship or *Tārā* led to *siddhi*. The cult of *Tārā* is also described in the *Yoginī Tantra* (1/12). So *Tārā* or *Ugratārā*, having a Buddhist origin, was later on assimilated into the Tāntrik system. 'The modern cult of *Tārā*, as remarked by R.P. Chanda, "seems to be a *Brāhmaṇic Śākta* adaptation of the *Mahāyāna* Buddhist cult of *Tārā*", and she "was evidently admitted to the *Mahāyāna* pantheon from the older *śākta* pantheon".[248] Most of these forms of the goddess were worshipped in Assam with bloody sacrifices, and under the Tāntrik system they were taken as manifestations of *Devī*, *Durgā* or *Kālī*. As the *Yoginī Tantra* states, *Tārā*, like *Kāmākhyā*, is the same as *Kālī* and the embodiment of love. Under the influence of the Hindu and Tāntrik-Buddhist doctrines, therefore, the original goddess *Devī*, an Āryya deity, called later on as *Śakti*, came to be known as *Kālī*, *Ugratārā*, *Cāmuṇḍā* and the like to the worshippers of the faith in general, and was worshipped under these names on different occasions, at Nīlācala, better known as *Kāmākhyā*.[248a]

The worship of *Devī* is also proved by epigraphy. The king Indrapāla is mentioned as versed in the Tāntrik lore.[249] The Tezpur grant[250] and the Gauhāti grant[251] point to the prevalence of the cult of *Mahā Gaurī*. The former grant states that the mount *Kāmakūṭa* was inhabited by *Kāmeśvara* and *Mahā Gaurī*. There are other reference to *Pārvatī* (Gauhāti grant, v. 14), *Gaurī* (*Ibid*, v. 1; Doobi grant, v. 40), *Gaṅgā* (Gauhāti grant, v. 1), *Girijā* (Khonāmukhi grant, v 11) and the like.

The extensive ruins of temples dedicated to *Devī* and different aspects of *Śakti* along with *Śiva* and their icons have been noticed from a number of places in Assam.[252] This confirms our belief that the faith had an important stronghold in the land from early times.

The existing materials, both records and remains, therefore, point to the widespread prevalence of the faith;[253] even after the Vaiṣṇava reformation a great bulk of the population remained *Śāktas*, and the temple of Kāmākhyā is still one of the great centres of Hindu pilgrimage for

248. *Indo-Aryan Races*, pp. 138, 142.
248a. *Yoginī Tantra*, II/7.
249. Gauhāti grant.
250. *K.S.*, p. 63.
251. *Ibid*, p. 138.
252. See Section 5.
253. See Eliot, *Hinduism and Buddhism*, II, 288-90; *J.R.A.S.*, 1910, pp. 1153-86; *A.C.R.*, 1891, I, p. 80; 1901, I, pp. 39f.

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all sects from all parts of India, and hundreds of animals and birds are sacrificed at the altar of the *Devī* in the name of religion.[254] With the incorporation of later Buddhist ideas into the system, Kāmarupā remained a noted centre of the Tāntrik-Buddhist faith.

7. **The latest phase of Buddhism, Vajrayāna and the Siddhas:**

That ancient Assam was a great centre of later Buddhism is shown by a number of sources. This was known as *Vajrayāna* or Tāntrik-Buddhism, and grew as a result of the incorporation of *Śakti* worship into *Mahāyāna*. In the opinion of the Vajrayānists, it is coextensive with '*Dharma*'.[255] It is "a queer mixture of monistic philosophy, magic and erotics with a small admixture of Buddhistic ideas".[256] Both the Hindu and the Buddhist *siddhas* contributed to its growth, and Kāmarūpa, with so many non-Aryan cults, constituted one of the fertile fields for the development of the faith.[257] Speaking of Tāntrikism and *Vajrayāna*, L. De La Vallee Poussin writes that Tāntrikism is not merely a pagan worship but also a way to liberation. It is constituted of three elements, *tantra*, *mantra* and *vajra*. *Vajra* stands for the divine energy, identified with intelligence, and its followers ultimately attain *prajñāpāramitā* (perfect truth).[258] *Vajra* also stands for the *linga* as *padma* for the *yonī*. Two interpretations are applied by the right and left handed worshippers; the latter conceives *Vajra* according to *Śaiva* pattern and the former is related to the *Vedantist* or the *Yoga* tradition. The left handed worship was a Buddhist adaptation of Śaivism or rather Śaktism; in order to realise divine nature, the followers had to perform the rites of union with a woman (*yoginī mudrā*); but the purification of body and mind before such enjoyment constituted the *Tāntrik-Vajrayāna* of the right-handed worship.[259] It is likely that the cult was influenced by the Magians. The worship of deities in their embrace was a symbol of the *mahāsukha* in *Śūnyatā*.[260] *Vajrayāna*, in any case, with its magic and rituals, means an 'adamantine path', or the 'vehicle of the diamond' and it drew its inspiration from a Tāntrik work, known as '*Guhyasamāja*', attributed to the *Siddha Asanga*.[261] The *Sahajīā* cult or *Sahajayāna* was an offshoot of *Vajrayāna*

254. See Shakespear, *History of Upper Assam*, etc., pp. 74f.
255. B. Bhattacharya, *I.H.Q.*, III, pp. 733-46.
256. Winternitz, *History of Indian Literature*, II, p. 388.
257. *I.H.Q.*, X, p. 16.
258. B. Bhattacharya, *Buddhist Esoterism*, pp. 32f.
259. *E.R.E.*, XII, pp. 193-97.
260. N.N. Law, *I.H.Q.*, (H.P.S. Mem. No.) March, 1938.
261. Vidhuśekhar Bhattacharya, *M.R.*, 1930, pp. 39f; B. Bhattacharya, *I.H.Q.*, III, pp. 733f; *A.B.O.R.I.*, X, pp. 1-24.

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and based on the similar union between two sexes, leading to final liberation.[262] The cult of *Yoginī Tantra* is fundamentally this (I/6).

According to the *Sādhanāmālā*,[263] the four centres of *Vajrayāna* were *Kāmākhyā*, *Śrīhaṭṭa*, *Pūrṅagiri*, and *Oḍḍiyāna*. The *Kālikā Purāṇa* mentions *Oḍrapīṭha*, *Śālaśaila*, *Pūrṇapīṭha* and *Kāmarūpa*.[263a] In the *Sahajayāna* the *siddhas* associated the nerve centres with *Oḍḍiyāna*, *Jālandhara*, *Pūrṇagiri* and *Kāmarūpa*.[264] The *Yoginī Tantra's* (II/I) main *pīṭhas* are: *Uḍḍiyāna*, *Pūrṇagiri*, *Jālaśaila*, *Kāmarūpa-Kāmākhyā* and *Śrīhaṭṭa*. The origin of the cult is associated with *Oḍḍiyāna* by *Pag Som Zon Zan*, which states that the first *siddha* was Rāhula or Saraha. *Oḍḍiyāna* is associated with *Lankāpuri*, and on the hint of Jacobi, B. Bhattacharya places the former in Assam, identifying *Lankāpuri* with *Lankā* in Nowgong.[265] According to *Pag Som Zon Zan*, Saraha was born of a Brāhmaṇa and a *Dākinī* in *Rājñī* and flourished during the time of Chandrapāla of Eastern India.[266] He is said to have performed miracles in the presence of the king Ratna-Pāla and his minister, and to have converted them to *Vajrayāna*. G. Tucci points out, on the basis of *Grubto'b*, that Rāhula was a *Śūdra* from Kāmarūpa; but in *Bka Abab Bdun Idan* he is said to have been a Brāhmaṇa from *Oḍḍiyāna* (*Oḍiviṣa*).[267] The actual origin of the *siddha* is uncertain; but it appears probable that he was born in *Oḍḍiyāna*, which, as suggested by H. P. Śāstrī, is to be located in Orissa,[268] as *Oḍra*, another name of Orrissa is similar to *Oḍḍiyāna;* but later on Rāhula's main activities were confined to *Rājñī* or modern Rāṇī in Kāmarūpa. It is of interest that Rāhula converted Ratnapāla, who was probably a king of Kāmarūpa, and the former, therefore, flourished towards the end of the tenth or the beginning of the 11th century A. D.[269] So Rāhula, the founder of the faith, found support in the royal patronage of the Pālas of Assam. Rāhula or Saraha's disciple was Nāgārjuna, who is associated

262. R. K. Mookerji, *Theory of Art and Mysticism*, pp. 166f, 210-18.

263. *Sādhanāmālā*, pp. 453f.

263a. The four *pīṭhas* of the *Hevajra Tantra*, a work of the 7th-8th century A.D., are *Jālandhara*, *Oḍiyāna*, *Pūrṇagiri* and *Kāmarūpa*.

264. P.C. Bagchi, '*Some Aspects of Buddhist Mysticism of Bengal*', *Cultural History of India*, I, pp. 312f.

265. *I.H.Q.*, III, pp. 733f; *Indian Buddhist Iconography*, Intro, XXVII; Nath, *J.A.R.S.*, VII, pp. 48f.

266. *Intro. to Buddhist Esoterism*, p. 46.

267. *J.A.S.B.*, 1930, p. 141.

268. See *I.H.Q.*, III, pp. 733f; D.C. Sircar, *Śākta Pīṭhas*, p. 12, f.n. 3, does not agree with this identification.

269. K.L. Barua, *J.A.R.S.*, II, pp. 44-51; *J.A.R.S.*, II, p. 84; M. Sahidulla, *J.A.S.B.*, 1898, p. 102; N.N. Das Gupta, *I.H.Q.*, XXVI, pp. 335f.

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with two *sādhanās*,[270] one for *Vajrayāna* and the other for *Ekajaṭā*, who is identified with *Mahācīna Tārā*, and whose cult is said to have been recovered by Nāgārjuna from Tibet.[271] In the *Sanmoha Tantra*, the origin of *Ekajaṭā* is given, and *Ugratārā* is said to have been born in *Cīnadeśa*.[272] There is still a temple of *Ugratārā* in Gauhati, which is believed to have been built by Ratnapāla or Indrapāla, after the worship of *Ekajaṭā* was introduced by Nāgārjuna in Kāmarūpa. Nāgārjuna was, therefore, the contemporary of Ratnapāla,[273] and can hardly be placed in the 7th century A. D., as suggested by G. Tucci,[274] B. Bhattacharya[275] and others.

One Savaripā was the disciple of Nāgārjuna and his disciple was Luipā. There are many traditions about the origin of both Luipā and Mīnanātha or Matsyendranātha. Some identify them as one, but others take them as two or even three persons. In *Pag Som Zon Zan*, Luipā is called a fisherman from *Oḍḍiyāna*.[276] The name is probably associated with '*Rohita*' (king of fish) or the eater of fish.[277] R. M. Nath associates Luipāda with the *Lohita* (*Luit*) river near Sadiyā.[278] Luipā is said to have resided in the court of Indrabhūti of *Oḍḍiyāna*. The identification of this prince with Indrapāla[279] is hardly correct, as *Oḍḍiyāna* is to be located in Orissa.[280] The Tibetan works *Grubto'b* and *Bka Abab Bdun Idan* mention that the *Siddha* Mīnanātha, a fisherman, was from Kāmarūpa. Tārānātha describes him and his son Maccindra as disciples of Carpati,[281] who was probably identical with Savaripā. The *Caryācaryaviniścaya*[282] and *Bauddha Gān O'Dohā* begin with an invocation to Luipāda, and the said works also refer to Mīnanātha. In the '*Nityāhnika-Tilakaṁ*' (in the preface to the *Kaulajñānanirṇaya*),[283] there is a descripition of one Matsyendranātha, who was originally a Brāhmaṇa and who, when he practised *yoga*, came to be known as Matsyendra. Nath thinks that the *siddhas* took the name of nātha, deva, etc., like Matsyendranātha.[284]

270. *Sādhanāmālā*, pp. 193f, 265f.
271. *I.H.Q.*, VI, pp. 584f; Bagchi, *I.H.Q.*, VII, pp. 1-16.
272. P.C. Bagchi, *I.H.Q.*, VII, pp. 1-16.
273. *E.H.K.*, p. 159; *J.A.R.S.*, II, 44-51.
274. *J.P.A.S.B.*, XXVI, p. 142.
275. *Intro. to Sādhanāmālā*, II, XLIIIf.
276. *Ibid*, XLVII.
277. *Kaulajñānanirṇaya*, pp. 22-24.
278. *J.A.R.S.*, VII, pp. 19f.
279. *Ibid.*
280. See above; K.L. Barua, *J.A.R.S.*, II, pp. 44-51.
281. See B.N. Datta, *Mystic Tales of Lāmā Tārānātha*, p. 56.
282. (Ed.) H.P. Śāstrī.
283. Bagchi, *Preface to the Kaulajñānanirṇaya*, p. 68.
284. *J.A.R.S.* VII, pp. 48-57; S. Sarasvatī, *Guru Pradīpa*, p. 73.

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G. Tucci identifies him with Luipā and holds that Matsyendra or its synonym was only a title of certain *siddhas* and was given to Luipā.[285] There are other legends about the name of Matsyendra. The *Skanda Purāṇa* (263) relates how he was released by *Śiva* from a fish, his name being, therefore, associated with the fish.[286] The same work mentions that his original home was in an island of *Kṣīrasāgara*. In the *Tantrasāra* of Kṛṣṇānanda, Mīnanātha was one of the *gurus*, associated with the worship of *Tārā*. S. C. Sil thinks that he was so named, because he was from *Matsyadeśa*. J. C. Ghosh, supporting P. C. Bagchi, holds that he was born in *Chandradvīpa* and attained *siddhi* in Kāmarūpa.[287]

On an examination of the relevant sources, it appears that Luipā from *Oḍḍiyāna* or Orissa was different from Matsyendranātha,[288] who had other names, such as Mīnanātha, Maccindra, etc. This will be evident from the following consideration. Mīnanātha, who composed a work on *Kāmaśāstra*, *Smaradīpikā*,[289] was the same person as Matsyendra. The association of the name with fish, water and Kāmarūpa indicates that he was a fisherman from Kāmarūpa. Certain differences in teachings between Luipā and Matsyendra also confirm that they were different persons. The latter was a *haṭhayogī*,[290] unlike the former; Gorakṣanātha, Matsyendra's disciple, introduced a new type of meditation,[291] which differs from that of Luipā as given in the *Pujā-Pradīpa*[292] and other works. It, therefore, appears probable that Luipā was different from Mīnanātha, and the latter may have flourished before the former.[293] It is wrong, however, to suggest that he was from Bengal or other places, as suggested by many writers.[294] The constant association of Matsyendra with Kāmarūpa and its various places confirms our belief that he was from Kāmarūpa.[295]

In *Pag Som Zon Zan* and the *Gorakṣavijaya* there is a reference to *Kadali* in Nowgong, where Matsyendra was entrapped by the queen,

285. *J.P.A.S.B.*, 1930, pp. 133-35.
286. *J.A.S.B.*, 1838, p. 138 (f.n.); Śāstrī, *B.S.P.P.*, XXIX, p. 52; *Gorakṣavijaya*, p. 13; A.B. Vidyābhūṣan, *Pravāsī*, 1328, II, pp. 729f.
287. *I.H.Q.*, VI, 562-64.
288. K.L. Barua, *J.A.R.S.*, II, pp. 44f.
289. *I.H.Q.*, VI, 562f.
290. B. Vidyāratna, *Haṭha Pradīpa*, p. 100.
291. *Gorkṣa Saṁhitā* (ed. P.K. Kaivarta), IV, pp. 192-98.
292. S. Sarasvatī, *Pūjā Pradīpa*, II, 80f.
293. R.M. Nath, *J.A.R.S.*, VII, pp. 48-57.
294. H.P. Śāstrī, *B.S.P.P.*, XXIX, p. 52; N.N. Dasgupta, *I.H.Q.*, XXXVI, pp. 333f.
295. C. Chakravarti, *I.H.Q.*, VI, pp. 178-81.

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Kamalā. Gorakṣa went there and released his *guru.*[296] Tārānātha states that in the 12th century A. D. many Tāntriks went to the land of the Kukis in Assam.[297] The *Kaulajñānanirṇaya* mentions a number of places in Assam, associated with the activities of the *siddhas*. In any case, both Matsyendra and Gorakṣa confined their activities to various places of *Kāmarūpa*.[298] Yayārtha's commentary on the *Tantrāloka* of Abhinavagupta[299] quotes a verse from an earlier *Tantra* to the effect that *Kaulajñāna* was transmitted to Mīnanātha through *Bhairava* and his consort in the *mahāpīṭha* of Kāmarūpa[300] He, therefore, flourished before or about the time of Yayārtha, who is placed in the 11th century A. D.[301] He promulgated the *Yoginī Kaula* doctrine in Kāmākhyā. We have mentioned elsewhere the composition of a few works by Matsyendra in Kāmarūpa.[302] The composition of another work, the *Bāhyāntara-boodhicitta-bandhopadeśa*, is also attributed to him, and it is remarkable that the language of his works correspond to the old *Kāmarūpī* dialect.[303] In the *Savara Tantra*, Mīnanātha is included among the 24 *Kāpālika siddhas*.[304] He was probably the contemporary of Ratnapāla and Purandarapāla. According to Grünwedel, Indrapāla, known also as Dārikapā, was a disciple of Luipā,[305] and he was no other than the king of the same name of Assam.

We have already stated that Gorakṣanātha was the disciple of Mīnanātha and his activities were also confined to various places of Assam. R. M. Nath thinks that there were probably two persons of the name of Gorakṣanātha, one of them being like his preceptor a *Haṭhayogī*, whose teachings are embodied in *Gorakṣasaṁhitā*.[306] But the inference is doubtful. It appears that Gorakṣa had two other names, Anangavajra and Rāmavajra.[307] Tārānātha writes, on the basis of the Tāntrik works, that Anangavajra was a son of a certain king of Eastern India, Gopāla, who was probably the king of Kāmarūpa, and Ananga was perhaps the younger

296. A. K. S. Viśārada, *Maināmatīr Gān* (ed. Bhattasali & Sircar); *Gorakṣa-vijaya*, p. 197.
297. *J.A.S.B.*, 1898, I, p. 20.
298. R.M. Nath, *J.A.R.S.*, VII, 19-23.
299. *Trivandrum Sans. Series*, pp. 24f.
300. *Tantrāloka*, pp. 20-25; C. Chakravarti, *I.H.Q.*, VI, 179-81.
301. See J. C. Chatterji, *Kāśmīra Śaivism*, I, p. 36.
302. See Section 3.
303. K.L. Barua, *J.A.R.S.*, II, pp. 44f; *E.H.K.*, p. 159 (f.n.).
304. Tucci, *J.P.A.S.B.*, 1930, pp. 133-41.
305. R.M. Nath, *J.A.R.S.*, VII, pp. 48-57; also N.N. Das Gupta, *I.H.Q.*, XXVI, pp. 335-36. Tibetan works mention one Mahidhara from Kāmarūpa (*E.H.K.*, p. 159).
306. *J.A.R.S.*, VII, pp. 48f.
307. Śāstrī, *Bauddha Gān O' Dohā*, Preface, p. 16; *J.A.S.B.*, 1898, I, p. 20.

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brother of Haraṣpāla.[308] Padmavajra, another *siddha* was the disciple of Anangavajra, and Hāḍipā, another pupil of Gorakṣa was a person distinguished in the time of Dharmapāla of Kāmarūpa, and his other name was Jālandharipā. As Ananga was another name of Gorakṣa, Padmavajra and Hāḍipā may have been the same person, and as Gorakṣa or Ananga was the contemporary of Harṣapāla, Padmavajra or Hāḍipā was that of Dharmapāla. The next *siddhas* were Indrabhūti of Oḍḍiyāna and Padmasambhava who were probably contemporaries of both Dharmapāla and Jayapāla.[309]

It appears from the accounts that most of the *Vajrayāna siddhas* were associated with Kāmarūpa and the Pāla line of kings, who not only patronised the system but also that some of whom became converts and attained the status of preceptors. The widespread prevalence of the faith is proved also by voluminous Tāntrik works of the period, dealing with magic and sorcery. But the mystic character of their works and the revolting rites of the followers, mostly addicted to wine and women, created an epoch of moral degeneration in any part of India where the faith had its stronghold.[310] It is again due to the mystic character of their works and practices, that the followers have been painted in the darkest colours. G. Tucci finds in the Tāntrik literature as a whole "one of the highest expressions of Indian mysticism, which may appear to us rather strange in its outward form, chiefly because we do not always understand the symbolical language in which they are written".[311] In any case, the revolting practices of the followers can hardly be justified on a moral standard. It is an enigma how such a faith as Buddhism, based on a high moral code, could be carried so far as to find liberation only in the union of the two sexes, as conceived by the Vajrayānists. In spite of their suppression in Assam by the *Vaiṣṇava* reformers of the 15th century A. D., their hold could not be entirely wiped out, and the faith continued to be practised under the name of the '*Rātikhowā Sect*' (practisers at night), as the followers performed their rites in secrecy at the dead of night.[312]

8. Conclusion :

There were other minor deities; but their followers were perhaps very few; nor is it probable that they represented distinct sects. The worship

308. *J.A.R.S.*, VII, pp. 48f.
309. K.L. Barua, *J.A.R.S.*, II, pp. 44-51.
Informations about the *Siddhas* and their works may be found in a few recent publications : (S.B. Dasgupta, *Obscure Religious Cults*, Calcutta, 1946).
310. See Barnett, *Antiquities of India*, p. 17.
311. *J.P.A.S.B.*, 1930, pp. 133-141.
312. Barua, *J.A.R.S.*, III, 44f.

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of deities like *Gaṇeśa* or *Gaṇapati*,[313] *Kārtikeya*, *Indra*, *Agni*, *Kuvera*, *Brahmā*, *Manasā*, etc., is, however, indicated by epigraphs and sculptures. Most of them were worshipped as consorts of other deities, such as *Śiva*, *Devī*, *Viṣṇu* and the like. The Kamauli grant bears the seal of *Gaṇapati*,[314] and the grant of Vallabhadeva (v. I) invokes him as *Lambodara*. The figures of *Gaṇeśa* and *Kārtikeya* are found on the side of *Devī*.[315] Images of *Kuvera* with his consorts, *Yakṣas* and *Kinnaras* are found from the existing ruins, and he was worshipped under various names. The worship of *Abja* (*Brahmā*) is shown by the grant of Vanamāla (v. 28).

In spite of the prevalence of so many Aryan and non-Aryan cults, there was perhaps a spirit of toleration among their adherents. The ruins indicate that at a single place, images of different deities were set up and temples, dedicated to deities of different sects were erected on the same site.[316] The best example is furnished by the shrines at Kāmākhyā and Hājo. Yuan Chwang saw hundreds of *Deva* temples and shrines of different faith during his visit to Kāmarūpa.[317] Even a Tāntrik work like the *Kālikā Purāṇa* deals with the mode of worship of these deities along with *Devī*. Though Naraka's origin is associated with the legend of *Viṣṇu's* incarnation, he is said to have introduced *Devī* worship in Kāmākhyā.[318] Bhagadatta, who was devoted to *Kṛṣṇa*, worshipped *Śiva* with penance.[319] Bhāskara, a devotee of *Śiva*,[320] claimed to have descended from *Viṣṇu* and was of Vaiṣṇava family, and, though he was not a Buddhist, he respected the Buddhist *Śramaṇas*,.[321] His close association with Yuan Chwang and Harṣa, and his participation in the ceremonies at *Kanauj* and *Prayāga*, where the images of the *Buddha*, *Śiva* and *Āditya* were given an equal place,[322] testify that the Kāmarūpa king had a catholic mind, and, like Harṣa, had an equal respect for other faiths. Though Vanamāla was devoted to *Śiva*,[323] it is likely that like Jayamāla, he came under the influence of later Buddhism.[324] In fact, all the Pāla rulers, though they had faith in *Śiva*, patronised *Vajrayāna* and *Devī* worship. Indrapāla

313. S. Barua, *J.A.R.S.*, III, pp. 39-47.
314. *E.I.*, II, pp. 347f.
315. See Section 5.
316. See Section 5.
317. Watters, II, pp. 185f.
318. Kākati, *Mother Goddess Kāmākhyā*, pp. 35f.
319. Tezpur grant, V 5.
320. Doobi grant, V 55; *H.C.* (Cowell), p. 217.
321. Watters, II, pp 185f; *H.C.*, pp. 211f.
322. *Life* , pp. 165f; Watters, I, p. 348; Beal, I, p. 215.
323. Nowgong grant, V 12.
324. *Ibid*. VV 12, 22-23.

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invokes *Śiva*, who is identified with *Viṣṇu*,[325] but in the Guākuchi grant, though he invokes the same deity, the plate bears the Vaiṣṇavite symbols.[326] Dharmapāla showed his devotion not only to *Śiva* and *Devī* or *Ardhayuvatīśvara*,[327] and '*dharma*'[328] under the influence of Tāntrik-Buddhism, but also to *Viṣṇu*.[329] Vaidyadeva was a devotee of both *Śiva* and *Viṣṇu*.[330] The tolerant mind of Vallabhadeva is proved by his invocation of *Bhāgavata Vāsudeva* and *Lambodara*.[331] Under the patronage of rulers, therefore, the subjects could profess any faith they liked. This is best illustrated by the evidence in the *Kālikā Purāṇa*,[331a] which lays almost equal stress on the cult of *Viṣṇu*, *Brahmā* and *Śiva*.

Another important feature of the religious history of Assam is that many non-Aryan ruling families and tribes, particularly of the plains, were gradually brought within the fold of Hinduism, and most of them given a divine ancestry. The Maṇipurīs were perhaps the first people to come under its pale. The land of Maṇipur is associated with *Arjuna's* exploits. The rulers claim Hindu ancestry and all their gods are Hindu gods.[332] The Koch kings trace their orign from *Śiva* and have gradually become completely Hinduised.[333] Similarly the Kachāris were converted, and their rulers trace their origin from *Bhīma* and *Hiḍimbā*.[334] The Chutīās, who established their kingdom in the Sadiyā region not later than the 13th century A. D., claimed the same Hindu origin after conversion to Hinduism.[335] The Āhoms, who established their kingdom in Eastern Assam in the beginning of the 13th century A. D., trace their origin from *Indra*, and within a short period they adopted Hinduism.[336] As a result of this conversion and assimilation of the culture of the plains the number of Hindu population increased, which resulted in the fusion of different races. Even though the inhabitants of both the hills and plains

325. Gauhāti grant, VV 1-2.
326. P. Bhattacharya, '*Adbhūta Tāmra Śāsana*', *H.P. Sambardhanā Lekhamālā*, pp. 164-66.
327. Khonāmukhi grant, V 1; Śubhaṅkarapāṭaka grant, V 1.
328. Puṣpabhadrā grant, V 7.
329. *Ibid*, V 1.
330. *E.I.*, II, pp. 347f.
331. *E.I.*, V, pp. 181f.
331a. *Pārśvayoḥ Śaṅkaraṁ Viṣṇuṁ pūjane pūjayet puraḥ :* (*Kālikā Purāṇa*, 80/84).
332. See Syed S. Ahmed, *J.A.R.S.*, III, pp. 66-69.
333. *E.H.K.*, p. 288.
334. Gait, *History of Assam*, pp. 247f; *A.C.R.*, 1891, p. 93.
335. *Ibid.*, pp. 40f.
336. *Ibid*, pp. 76f.

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continued to profess different faiths, the harmony was not lost, and the followers of all sects prospered here equally well, and contributed to the building up of a complex socio-religious fabric of ancient Assam.[337]

It is difficult indeed to describe the origin and spread of the different religious systems in Assam in chronological sequence, which could have been possible had the archaeological finds been found in their original structure and position. A land of planetary and *Sūryya* worship, having been assimilated into the cult of *Viṣṇu*, as evident from the existing temple remains at Hājo and Kāmākhyā in particular, and as explained by the *Kālikā Purāṇa* itself, other Buddhist works and epigraphs, the *Āryyadharma* had its established root in the soil, tempered no doubt by Pre-Aryan cults. Along with it, Buddhism from the time of at least *Mahāyāna* existed at different centres throughout Assam including Hājo and Kāmākhyā, followed perhaps by the cult of *Śiva* and *Devī*, from which period might have started reaction of what may be called Brāhmaṇical Hinduism. With the rise of the sectarian faiths and the evolution of the cult of *Śakti* in its various aspects from about the 7th- 8th century A. D., quite a different colour was given to the worship of *Śiva*, one of the Hindu Trinity, and of *Devī*, and with the incorporation of certain Buddhist ideas into the system or systems, *Vajrayāna* and Tāntrikism with ritualistic details began to flourish, centering round the *Devīpīṭha* Kāmākhyā. The rise of neo-Vaiṣṇavism, it appears, could not effectively wipe out the influence of the Tāntrik system.[338]

337. See N.N. Vasu, *Social History of Kāmarūpa*, I, pp. 1-2.

338. B.K. Kākati's work : *Puraṇi Kāmarūpar Dharmar Dhārā* contains useful information on the subject. But, here also no systematic attempt has been made to show in chronological order the origin and development of the various systems bearing on sectarianism.

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SECTION 5

MONUMENTS

1. Introduction:

The early history of art in Assam is still dark. We find to-day huge heaps of ruins, lying scattered throughout the State, but not a single ancient temple or building is found in its original condition.[1] The treatment of the subject, therefore, from a chronological standpoint seems difficult. Natural causes and time have done great havoc to all monuments of the past. The materials used for the construction of temples and other edifices, as appears from the ruins, consisted of stone, brick and even clay, for many earth embankments have been traced. The remains include architecture and fortifications, sculptured designs. icons, and a few specimens of painting.

Both literature and epigraphy point to the artistic activities of the rulers and the ruled. Besides the temples at Hājo, Kāmākhyā, Sadiyā, etc., mentioned in the *Purāṇas* and the *Tantras*, we find an earlier reference to the temples of the Sun in Kāmarūpa in the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* (109). Yuan Chwang refers to hundreds of deva temples during the 7th century A. D.[1a] The erection of temples as early as the 5th-6th century A. D. is proved by the remains of Dah Parvatīā. Epigraphy makes further references not only to the erection of temples but also to buildings of a secular nature. The Tezpur grant of Vanamāla (v 24) states that the king repaired the fallen lofty temple of Śiva. Ratnapāla "studded the earth with white-washed temples, enshrining Śambhū".[2] Vanamāla erected a row of places "which though having no equal in the world, stood equal on its ground, though not limited in rooms, possessed many rooms, and though gay with several ornamentation, were also finished with realistic pictures".[3] The city of *Durjayā* possessed such lofty buildings that "the disc of the sun was hid (from view) by the thousands of plastered turrets

1. The temple of *Siddheśvarī*, dedicated originally to *Sūryya*, at Śuālkuchi, where a beautiful image of the deity is found, is almost in its original structure.

1a. Watters, II, p. 186.

2. Gauhāti grant, V 10.

3. Nowgong grant, V 14.

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which were rendered still whiter by the nector-like smiles of the love-drunk fair damsels standing on them".[4]

All types of art depended upon architecture;[5] though the basis of architecture was religion,[6] it would be a mistake to hold that no work of art or building was produced except to the service of deities. The reference we have made to the palatial buildings and the extant ruins, some of which may have belonged to secular art, do not justify the conclusion arrived at by B.K. Barua that "we have thus no information of the secular architecture of the period."[7] It is worth-noting that the remains that have so far been discovered from the land, point to the conclusion that no sharp distinction was drawn between temples dedicated to *Viṣṇu*, *Śiva*, *Devī* and the like. Not only do we find remains of temples dedicated to different deities in a single spot, e.g. at Hājo and Tezpur, but also in a single structure, dedicated for instance to *Śiva*, we find sculptures and images, showing other deities. In Assam, as in other parts of India, hardly any distinction can be made between a shrine dedicated only to *Śiva* and the one dedicated to *Viṣṇu*. In other words, the water-tight divisions of architecture into Śaivite, Viṣṇuite and the Buddhistic, or the conception that the *Viṣṇu* shrine was only confined to Northern India and that of *Śiva* to Southern India, or that the *Viṣṇu* shrine is Indo-Aryan and the *stupa* Dravidian,[8] cannot be justified[9] on the basis of the ruins of Assam from our period.

2. Description of Architectural remains :

(a) *Darrang—Ruins of Dah Parvatiā* : The temple ruins at Dah Parvatiā provide one of the earliest specimens of architecture and stone carving in Assam, ascribed to the 5th-6th century A.D. The nature of the remains indicates that the temples were dedicated both to *Śiva*[10] and *Viṣṇu*.[11] The following specimens are important:

(i) Door-jambs, containing in the lower part the beautifully executed figures of *Gaṅgā* and *Yamunā*, attended by females. At bottom of

4. Bargāon grant, Lines 31-32.
5. Smith, *E.R.E.*, I, pp. 740-43.
6. *Ibid*; also Grünwedel, *Budhdist Art in India*, p.1; *Foucher, The Beginnings of Buddhist Art*, pp. 10-13.
7. *Cultural History of Assam*, I, p. 168.
8. Fergusson, *History of Architecture*, Intro. p. 14.
9. E.B. Havell, *Ancient and Medieval Architecture of India*, pp. 94, 104.
10. K.N. Dikṣhit, *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1922-23, 119-20; *Ibid*, 1928-29, pp. 45-46.
11. R.D. Banerji, *Ibid*. 1924-25, pp. 94-102; also K.L. Barua, *J.A.R.S.*, II, pp. 104-5.

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the jamb on the right are two female figures, one standing with a *cāmara* and the other kneeling in front, with a flat receptacle containing flowers. A third female figure is seen with a *cāmara* behind or to the right of the main figure. To the left of the halo there is a *nāgī* kneeling and to the right two geese flying towards the main figure. In the left jamb two similar figures, a *nāgī* and geese are depicted.

(ii) The upper part of each of these jambs is separated into four vertical bands, two of which are continued in the lintel. Each of these bands contains human figures, floral and foliage decorations.

(iii) Each of these bands at the top ends in a vase with ornamental foliage, hanging from its corner. A pilaster, square in section, rises from the vase and ends in a cruciform capital with a sprawling *gaṇa* on each side of its arms.

(iv) The lintel, which is also beautifully sculptured, appears to be larger in size than the door frame.

(v) Two of the inner bands of carving on the jambs are continued as horizontal bands at the bottom of the lintel. In the centre there is a beautiful flying figure holding a garland in his hands, representing *Garuḍa*.

(vi) Above these two bands there is another, containing *chaitya* window patterns and showing figures of *Śiva*, *Kṛṣṇa* and *Sūryya*.

In the vicinity of Dah Parvatiā there are a large number of mounds containing images of *Viṣṇu*, *Bhairava*, *Hara-Gaurī* and other deities.[12] The remains in the area belong to the Gupta School of Art.[13]

Bāmuṇī Hill remains : Another important spot of varied archaeological interest is the Bāmuṇī Hill, lying near Tezpur, and the area still contains ruins of temples and specimens of sculptures of not later than the 8th-9th century A.D. Like those at Dah Parvatiā, the temples of this area were dedicated to different gods like *Viṣṇu*, *Śiva*, etc.[14] The remains belong to as many as seven shrines. The important specimens are as follows:

(i) Some pavements inside the *garbhagṛhas* of the larger shrines are still intact.

12. K.N. Dikṣhit, *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1922-23, pp. 119-20.
13. R.D. Banerji, *Ibid.* 1924-25, pp. 92-102.
14. T. Bloch, *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1906-7, p. 18; R.D. Banerji, *Ibid.* 1924-25, pp. 94f; Dikshit, *Ibid*, 1928-29, p. 44; Banerji, *Ibid.* 1925-26, pp. 115-16.

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(ii) An *antarāla* forming part of a larger temple, with circular sculptured door step, intervenes between the sanctum and its *maṇḍapa* which was gigantic in size like the shafts of pillars.

(iii) A cross-shaped bracket and a huge lintel ornamented with horned *kīrtimukhas*.

(iv) Door jambs with miniature temple patterns, floral and other designs.

(v) Panels containing human figures and other ornamentations. The central panel contains the figures of the incarnations of *Viṣṇu*, *Narasiṁha*, *Paraśurāma*, *Balarāma*, *Varāha and Rāma*.

(vi) Many square brackets with oblong panels and bas-reliefs; one of them bears the figures of a male and a female.

(vii) There are others with various decorative designs. The best specimen is the trefoil arch with beautiful ornamentations.

Tezpur remains :

The modern town of Tezpur contains some of the most ancient and best remains of temples and buildings. Here also the shrines were dedicated to gods such as *Sūryya*, *Śiva* and possibly also to the Buddha.[15] T. Bloch rightly pointed out that the civil station of Tezpur, like that of Gauhāti, stands on large mounds which must have contained ruins of temples and ancient cities.[16] The earliest reference to the remains was made by Westmacott.[17] Dalton, describing them, came to the conclusion that the shrines were either left incomplete or demolished. He noticed some beautifully executed and decorated blocks of stone, which led him to remark that "the art had reached its culminating point".[18] These may be assigned to temples, dedicated to different deities, ranging from at least the 10th to the 12th century, A.D. The important specimens, divided into three sets of buildings, are as follows:

(i) The most remarkable sculptures of the first group are two shafts of pillars and a huge lintel. The shaft of one pillar is sixteen sided, indicating that the temple to which this belonged was a *Śiva* temple, as this

15. Dalton, *J.A.S.B.*, XXIV, p. 19.
16. *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1906-7.
17. *J.A.S.B.*, IV, pp. 186f.
18. Dalton, *J.A.S.B.*, XXIV, pp. 10f.

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kind of pillar is associated with a *Śiva* shrine.[19] In the second pillar, the upper part of the shaft is dodecagonal and near the top is divided into three horizontal bands. Both the pillars contain floral and other designs, and in style belong to the same temple of the same period. The lintel is divided into two parts; the upper part contains miniature temple patterns with the phallic emblem of *Śiva* in each. The lower part is decorated with the figure of *Gaṇeśa* and other sculptured designs. The nature of the carving indicates that the temple, to which these remains belong, was built during the 10th century A.D.[20]

(ii) The second group of sculptures consists of specimens from a gigantic temple. The door sill and the lintel, which is huge in size, determines the size of the door frame. There are three raised panels on it, each of which is divided into a larger niche in the centre with a smaller one on each side. The panels contain the figures of *Brahmā*, *Sūryya* and *Śiva*. The space between the raised panels depict six divine figures. The sill of the door frame is also gigantic in size, and shows a vase in the centre flanked by two lions. Each end is occupied by a niche showing a male and a female and flanked by a smaller and narrower niche on a corner depicting a human figure. The nature of the remains shows that a gigantic temple, dedicated to *Sūryya* existed there.[21]

(iii) A number of carved stones or pieces of pillar, belonging to another temple, are lying scattered over the area. Most of the carved stones are from the plinth mouldings and string courses of a gigantic temple. The string courses contain beautiful ornamentations. In the centre of some of the stone pieces there is a projecting niche flanked by round pilasters with divine figures. In some of the niches are seen figures of *Sarasvatī*, *Śiva* and *Durgā*, seated in their conventional style so common in North India. The outlines of plinth mouldings contain beautiful sculptured designs. The most remarkable specimen of the collection is a slab from the upper part of the plinth mouldings. It is divided into sunken panels by means of circular pilasters, each containing a male or a female, two males or two females. The figures are a man fighting with a lion, another man playing on a conch, another playing a drum and a female dancing, a man playing on a drum and another dancing. Another slab contains *chaitya* window patterns. The second group of sculptures belong to a temple of about the 12th century A. D.

19. Havell, *Ancient and Medieval Architecture of India*, pp. 55f.
20. R.D. Banerji, *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1924-25, pp. 90f.
21. *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1924-25, pp. 90f.

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(iv) Two other specimens from the area appear to belong to another temple. One of them is a stone jamb from a door and the second a slab with three sunken panels, occupied by human or divine figures.

Remains from Śiṅgri and other places : Extensive ruins of temples at Śiṅgri belong to Buddhist, *Śiva* and *Durgā* shrines of about the 9th century A. D., and some of the specimens bear close resemblance to those at Deopānī and Numaligarh.[22] Dalton noticed some of the remains and came to the conclusion that new shrines had been built with the old materials belonging to a Buddhist shrine. The interior of the existing temple gives us an idea of the original plan.[23] The specimens from the area include carved stones, door frames, pillars, lotus carved stone blocks and other slabs, some containing amorous scenes, which indicate the influence of the Tāntrik-Buddhists on the sculptures. As at Śiṅgri, there are ruins at Negheriting which show that new temples have been built with the old materials. The remains belong to a *Śiva* temple of about the 11th-12th century A. D.; there were probably other minor shrines dedicated to deities like *Viṣṇu*, *Sūryya* and *Devī*. A number of sculptured specimens were found in the locality.[24]

From Viśvanātha, Bihāli, Gomiri and the neighbouring places similar ruins of temples, dedicated mainly to *Śiva* and *Devī* with their emblems and other sculptured specimens have been noticed.[25] Almost similar ruins are found in Mayapura and Ratnapura.[26] In Chārduār, remains of temples, blocks of stone pillars and capitals with carvings were found. Westmacott remarked, on the basis of the extensive ruins, that "the spot must have been the capital of a sovereign prince or a principal seat of the Hindu religion and enjoyed a large share of prosperity at some remote period".[27]

(b) *Remains at Gauhāti, Kāmākhyā and Hājo:* The modern town of Gauhāti (ancient Prāgjyotiṣapura) and its neighbouring places still contain remains of varied archaeological interest. The importance of the town is proved by the existing remains of temples and fortifications, found in an area extending over miles. The city was well guarded by

22. S. Kataki, *J.A.R.S.*, IV, pp. 93-95; R.M. Nath, *Ibid*, V, pp. 109-112.
23. Dalton, *J.A.S.B.*, XXIV, pp. 10-12.
24. *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1924-25, pp. 94-102; Dikṣhit, *Ibid*, 1923-24, pp. 34-35; 1928-29, pp. 45-46.
25. *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1924-25, pp. 94-102; Dalton, *J.A.S.B.*, XXIV, pp. 20-21; Westmacott. *J.A.S.B.*, IV, pp. 190-91; W.N. Edwards, *J.A.S.B.*, 1904 (Extr. No.), pp. 16-19.
26. D.N. Das, *J.A.R.S.*, VIII, pp. 43-49.
27. *J.A.S.B.*, IV, pp. 186f.

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long walls and fortifications, with gateways of stone and brick. The old temples have been destroyed and new ones raised. The present hospital compound appears to have been the site of an old shrine of a gigantic dimension.[28] Most of the remains now lie buried underground; but a few of the existing sculptured stones and images noticed particularly in the adjacent hills, lying close to the present town, give us an idea of the huge number of structures that were built in the capital city under the patronage of the ruling families. Blocks of stone and stone pillars with fine sculptures and icons have been found in and around the town, the ancient Prāgjyotiṣapura. Mention in this connection may be made of those found recently at the present Weaving Institute and at the Civil Hospital premises, including the Jubilee garden area in the heart of the town. Equally important are the archaeological finds at the Narakāsur Hills. Similar finds may be seen lying scattered at different places.

The antiquity of the shrine at Kāmākhyā is well known. The place lies at a distance of about two miles from Gauhāti. Though the original shrine or shrines, dedicated perhaps to *Sūryya* and Buddhist deities have been destroyed, some of the older remains show the archaeological importance of this small hill of Kāmākhyā. The temple still holds a high reputation among the religious centres of Assam. The remains belong to different periods of history, beginning with the 7th-8th century A. D., and even earlier. Some of the capitals of pillars are of gigantic size, indicating that the temple to which these belonged was as large as the sun temple of Tezpur.[29] The ancient remains consist of the following:

(i) Carved blocks of stone and well-decorated capitals.

(ii) The lower part of the sanctum of the temple, still in good preservation, consists of sunken panels with beautiful carvings.

(iii) The pit at the back of the shrine contains ruins belonging to different periods of history, beginning with the 8th century A. D.

(iv) The remains include well-decorated stone blocks and rock-cut images. Beautiful carvings on the western gateway of the temple depict domestic scenes, such as a house-holder doing his worship, while his wife is suckling her child, and a woman worshipper is kneeling and pouring water from a vessel into the mouth of an animal.[30]

28. Dalton, *J.A.S.B.*, XXIV, pp. 1-4.
29. *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1924-25 pp. 100f; also Dikṣhit, *Ibid*, 1923-24 pp. 80-81; Ramachandran and Dikṣhit, *Ibid*, 1930-34, p. 129; Ramachandran, *Ibid* 1936-37, pp. 54f.
30. *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1924-25, pp. 100f; 1936-37, pp. 54f.

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(v) Of particular interest are the relic casket of stone; two images of the Buddha and Bodhisattva; one rock-cut image of the Buddha under the Bodhi tree, carved on the rock lying by the side of the old path below; and pieces of octagonal pillars.

(vi) Of the other Buddhist sculptures, three are very important. One is the huge stone image of an elephant; another, showing Gautama in archery contest; and still another, Gautama on horseback, depicting the birth story of Gautama, the marriage archery contest and his great departure from home respectively. These sculptures, along with the relic casket, show that Nīlācala was a great centre of Buddhism at least from the time of the *Mahāyāna*. One wonders why the last sculpture representing his *Mahāparinirvāṇa* is also not there. Or, should we not suppose that the so called stone image of Bhīṣma in his *śaraśayyā* shows but the last journey of the Buddha?

About three miles from Kāmākhyā lies Pāṇḍu which also contains remains of temples and images.[31] Temple ruins and sculptured specimens lie scattered in Umānanda, Aśvakrānta, Urvaśī, Maṇikarṇeśvara, Śukreśvara, Navagraha and other places near Gauhāti.[32]

Lying at a distance of 14 miles from Gauhāti, the Madana-Kāmadeva Parvat, contains ruins of shrines which, in the opinion of Dalton, contained as many as eighteen in number.[33] The main shrine was dedicated to *Śiva*. The basement of the old temple is all that is now found. The important specimens in the area include stone images of *Madana* and *Rati*, seated in a position of embrace, recalling the influence of Tāntrikism; other specimens are decorated slabs, stone walls, brick pieces, broken pillars, capitals and bases, some containing human figures in obscene attitude, animal and floral designs.[34]

The shrine at Hājo, dedicated to various Hindu and Buddhist deities, has as great an importance as Kāmākhyā in the religious and art history of Assam. An early reference to a Buddhist shrine there was made by Dalton, who noticed that the present temple of *Hayagrīva* was built with old materials and upon an old Buddhist site.[34a] The temple ruins at

31. Dikṣhit, *Ibid*, 1923-24, pp. 80-81.

32. *Ibid*, 1924-25, 100f.; Dalton, *J.A.S.B.*, XXIV, 4-5; K.L. Barua, *J.A.R.S.*, II, 104-5; S. Kataki, *I.H.Q.*, VI, 364-72.

33. *J.A.S.B.*, XXIV, 7-8.

34. T.K. Sarma, *J.A.R.S.*, X, 82-83.

34a. The stone door leading to the Maṇikūṭa at Hājo contains fine foliage decoration recalling Gupta art. The images of the elephants, engraved at the base of the present *Maṭha* are, in the opinion of Dalton, similar to those of the Kailāsa temple at the caves of Ellora: (*J.A.S.B.*, LXI, p. 37) The sculptures recall Buddhist art.

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Hājo, like that of Kedāranātha, contain beautifully executed sculptures, with animal and floral designs.[35] The nature of the remains makes it certain that Hājo attained its pre-eminence in the worship of the sun, *Hayagrīva-Mādhava*, the Buddha and deities of Śaktism or the Tāntrik faith.

Extensive ruins of temples, along with sculptured blocks, probably three in number, lie scattered on the bank of the Sesa river. Dalton noticed figures of the Buddha along with those of *Durgā* and *Gaṇeśa* among the ruins and came to the conclusion that the site originally contained Biddhist shrines, but subsequently it formed a centre of the *Śakti* faith.[36]

About 30 miles to the south-west of Gauhāti in South Kāmarūpa there are remains of a group of temples, probably three; a large number of well decorated stone slabs are lying in the area. The first temple was built of granite with a pyramidal roof. The sculptures consist of human, animal and floral designs. The nature of the remains indicates that the area contained *Śiva* and *Durgā* shrines.[37]

(c) *Ruins from Goālpārā* : The modern district of Goālpārā contains scattered remains of temples and buildings. The place called Yogīghopā still contains some relics recalling the influence of Tāntrik-Buddhism; these appear to be contemporary with the specimens from Kāmākhyā and Pāṇḍu of the 9th-10th century A.D.[38] There are remains of Buddhist shrines in the area.[39] In Dekdhowā there are some stones with the carvings of *Viṣṇupada* and *Dharmacakra*. In Ḍekāidol there are remains of large stone cooking vessels. In Marnai there are remains of a brick built structure; one stone piece shows *Nandi*. In Pañcaratna there are ruins of an old Buddhist shrine. In Tukreśvarī, Dudhnāth and Mahāmāyā there are ruins of *Śakti* shrines. In Sūryya Pāhār there are relics of *Sūryya* temples, including those of *Viṣṇu*, *Śiva* and *Devī*.[40] The remains from the district point to the influence of the non-Aryans on the Hindu and Buddhist art.

(d) *Nowgong ruins* : The present district of Nowgong contains enormous ruins of temples and buildings, which may be placed between

35. *J.A.S.B.*, XXIV, 8-10; Kataki, *J.A.R.S.*, II, 92f.
36. *J.A.S.B.*, XXIV, pp. 21-24.
37. Dalton, *Ibid*, pp. 5-7.
38. *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1928-29, pp. 143-44.
39. S. Kataki, *J.A.R.S.*, (April) 1934.
40. Kataki, *J.A.R.S.*, (April) 1934.

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A.D. 600 and 1200. The remains in the area show that the shrines were dedicated to different deities, and some of the specimens indicate strong non-Aryan influence.[41] The following areas reveal architectural remains :

Gosāijuri : The place contains 8 mounds and each of them shows various ruins of temples, built of stone and bricks, and blocks of stone which depict beautiful specimen of sculptures, containing human figures and animal and floral designs. The nature of the ruins indicates that the area contained shrines dedicated to *Śiva* and *Viṣṇu*.

Ākāśīgaṅgā : The place lies at a distance of seven miles from Ḍavāka. The area contains ruins of pillars, capitals, door lintels, perforated windows, *āmalakas*, sills, jambs, pedestals, etc., some containing beautifully executed divine, human, animal and floral designs. One door piece shows a *dvārapāla*, a dancer and a female worshipper. The nature of the ruins shows that the spot contained shrines of *Śiva* and *Viṣṇu*.

Gāchtal : The place lies at a distance of two miles from Ḍavāka and contains remains of two *Śiva* shrines, ascribed to the 10th-11th Century A.D. The remains include beautifully executed pillars, bases, capitals, etc., containing divine, human, animal and floral designs.

The remains from Mikir-āṭi belong to seven shrines dedicated to both *Viṣṇu* and *Śiva*, and contain blocks of stone bearing divine figures.

Sītājakhalā and Mahādeocal : Both the places contain remains of *Śiva* shrines and blocks of stone bearing divine and human figures and floral designs. One door piece shows three figures, a *dvārapāla*, a female worshipper and a dancing figure; an architrave is seen with the facsimile of temple *śikharas* or cupolic domes on the top layers, with foliage decorations.

Vasundharī and Maṭhorbari : There are similar remains in both the places and the nature of the ruins indicates that a *Viṣṇu* temple existed there.

Chāṅgchauki : The remains from this place include variously carved blocks of stone; one door-piece contains figures of a *dvārapāla*, a dancer and a female worshipper; another slab shows a pair of mithans in embrace.

Kāwaimārī : The remains from the area reveal the existence of a big temple and include stone pieces bearing various human, animal and floral designs.

41. *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1936-37; 54f; *J.A.R.S.*, V, 14f.

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Yogījān : The place contains extensive remains of temples probably five, of *Śiva* (*Pañca Rudras*).

Āmtal : The place is near Hojāi and contains ruins of *Śiva* temples along with a number of sculptured blocks of stone, bearing divine, animal and floral designs. Similar ruins are lying in Ḍavāka.

Moudaṅgā : About ten miles to the east of Ḍavāka is Moudaṅgā and in its neighbourhood is Maṭhorbari. The area contains extensive remains of temples, dedicated to different deities, and blocks of stone bearing various sculptural designs. All these remains, including those from the different places of the valley of the Kapili and the Yamunā, may be ascribed to a period between the 9th to the 12th century A.D.[42]

Urdhagaṅgā : In this area there are remains of varied archaeological interest with tanks. The nature of the ruins indicates that a *Devī* temple existed there.

Baḍgaṅgā : Another place of archaeological interest is *Baḍgaṅgā*. The remains in the area indicates that both *Śiva* and *Viṣṇu* shrines existed there; a number of carved blocks of stone, bearing divine and human figures and floral designs, are lying in the area.[43]

Mahāmāyāthān : The remains in the area include stone pieces with variously decorated designs; one square pillar bearing the engravings of a lotus is found. Such pillars are associated with a shrine dedicated to *Brahmā*.[44] There are others with decorations. The nature of the remains indicates that temples, dedicated to both *Viṣṇu* and *Devī*, existed in the area.[45] Similar remains are found in Hojāi, Buḍhāgosāithān and Hātīmurā.[46]

Nabhaṅgā and Kenduguri : Throughout the area and further east at Ḍekāpati there are extensive ruins of temples and brick edifices.[47] There are others in the Bhoi-Parvat and Tetelipukhurī; about 7 miles to the south-east of the Mahāmāyā Hill there are remains of earth embankments, ruins of temples and tanks, and blocks of stone with decorative designs.

42. *J.A.R.S.*, VI, 34-37.
43. *J.A.R.S.*, V, pp. 14f.
44. Havell, *Ancient and Medieval Architecture*, pp. 55f.
45. *J.A.R.S.*, V, p. 14f.
46. K. L. Barua, *J.A.R.S.*, II, p. 12.
47. R. M. Nath, *J.A.R.S.*, VI, pp. 34-37.

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One door-lintel depicts scenes similar to those from Tezpur and Dah Parvatiā. The remains in the area, therefore, may be ascribed to the 9th century A.D., if not earlier.[48]

Tarāvasā : The place contains remains of temples, which include broken pillars and other stone pieces with decorations. The remains from Phulanī and Dīghalpānī show temple structures, embankments and tanks. Some blocks of stone depict various divine figures and other designs.

Most of the remains from Nowgong, lying close to Mikir Hills, inhabited by the Mikirs and other non-Aryan tribes, show non-Aryan influences on their art, and are indicative of the admixture of peoples of diverse origin, inhabiting the region from early times.

(e) *Śivasāgar—Deopānī and Numaligarh remains* : The existing remains of temples, brick-built edifices and others in the area show that extensive temples and buildings, dedicated to different gods like *Śiva* and *Viṣṇu* existed here, ranging from the 9th to the 12th century A.D.[49] Some of the important sculptures appearing on stone blocks, pillars, capitals, bases, *toraṇa* gateways, etc., show divine, human and animal figures and floral designs. Some stone friezes in the area depict Epic stories and interesting domestic scenes. One frieze with panels shows *Rāma* and *Lakṣmaṇa*, and *Sugrīva* kneeling before *Rāma*; *Hanumāna* and another monkey are watching the scene with reverence with their folded hands. Another frieze shows a royal archer shooting a couple of deer in coition. The scene recalls the story of *Pāṇḍu* of the *Mahābhārata*, who was cursed to die with his sexual desires unfulfilled;[50] it is really a sage with his wife in the guise of deer. The third frieze shows a woman in her toilet, a man dragging a fallen women where another is thrashing her, while another woman is dissuading him, and a man shown with a raised mace. Another frieze with four panels shows an ascetic pushing a goat before him, another ascetic is dancing, and a seated woman in an ecstatic mood. In the sixth frieze worshippers are shown sitting with folded hands, or in *viṣmaya*, or holding flowers. Another frieze with two panels depicts a fight between two warriors; other scenes in the frieze are a horseman, a seated woman, another playing a flute, a bearded *dvārapāla*, elephants, plants, foliage and bead courses, conch, flowers, a seated man, caring for his family, and worshippers in different poses.

48. *Ibid*, VIII, pp. 85f.
49. *A.R.A.S.I*, 1936-37, 54f; Hannay, *J.A.S.B.*, 1848, 460-70; Nath, *J.A.R.S.*, III 130-134.
50. *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1936-37, 54f.

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Remains of pillars, bases, brick pieces, capitals, etc., with various designs are lying scattered in and around Deopānī and Numaligarh. Two of the carvings from Numaligarh are specimens of local art. One represents a lion, which has on the top an inscription in *Nāgarī* characters. One pillar piece shows a *Garuḍa*, advancing towards an ascetic in a threatening attitude. The scene depicts the story of the *garbabhaṅga* of *Garuḍa*, as given in the *Mahābhārata*.[51]

(f) *Ḍimāpur ruins* : We have mentioned elsewhere some of the monuments of this non-Aryan centre of culture; we have also pointed to the influence of Hindu art on some of the remains. Besides the monoliths, the ancient Kachāri capital Ḍimāpur contains other ruins of temples and buildings, embankments and tanks. "It is a strange sight to see," remarks Johnstone, "the relics of a forgotten civilisation in the midst of a pathless forest."[52] The entrance gateway was beautifully executed and the palatial building of the capital was in good preservation till recent times. There are scattered blocks of stone and brick pieces with various designs.[53]

(g) *Ruins at Sadiyā* : In the extreme north-east region of Assam lies Sadiyā and *Kuṇḍīna* of traditions, where remains of temples and buildings, including the Copper temple, dedicated to *Devī*, are yet to be found.[54] On the walls and buildings of temples there are various sculptured designs, including human figures, animals, birds, flowers, geometrical designs, and some are depicted in erotic style like those at Ḍimāpur. Another link connecting the ruins with those at Ḍimāpur is noticed in the capitals and bases of pillars.[55]

One of the jambs of the gateway of the temple has the carving of a *Śiva liṅga*, and a number of carved stones contain figures of various designs, recalling the medieval art of India. The area was probably occupied by Hindus before its occupation by the Tibeto-Burman or the Chutiās, and it is likely that an advance section of the Alpines or early Aryans inhabited the area. The influence of the non-Aryan art and the human sacrifice associated with the Copper temple were perhaps due to

51. *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1936-37, pp. 54f.
52. *My Experiences in Manipur and the Naga Hills*, pp. 8f.
53. Godwin-Austen, *J.A.S.B.*, 1874, I, pp. 2-3; *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1906-7, pp. 19f; Grange, *J.A.S.B.*, IX, II, pp. 954f; Brown Wood, *Ibid*, XIII, II, p. 772.
54. L. W. Shakespear, *History of Upper Assam*, etc., 82-84; Rowlatt, *J.A.S.B.*, XIV, II, 478-79, 494; Hannay, *J.A.S.B.*, XVII, I, 559-62, 571.
55 T. Bloch, *A.R A S.I.*, 1904-5, 7-8.

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the migration of Tibeto-Burmans to the region. In fine, the relics of the Sadiyā region show the mixture of the Aryan and non-Aryan elements in some early period. T. Bloch is right in suggesting "that the country, east of Sadiyā was at former time better known to and in closer touch with the Aryan population of North India than at present".[56] In the neighbourhood of Sadiyā lies the historic *Paraśurāmakuṇḍa*, and the sanctity of the place, as remarked by the same authority, "dates from a time when the ancient city of Bhīṣmakanagara was inhabited and formed perhaps the seat of the governor of one of the frontier provinces of Assam."[56a]

3. Other remains :

There are besides ancient relics of pottery, terra cotta figures and remains of fortifications, embankments, tanks and stone bridges from different parts of this ancient land. We have mentioned a few specimens of earthen pots and plates in dealing with prehistoric archaeology. The best specimens from the historical period are found in Dah Parvatiā. The terra cotta plaques from the area show a close similarity with the art of Bengal. They resemble those from Birhāṭ, Rāypur and Pāhārpur in the Rājshāhi district. The best one shows a human figure in each case. "The moulding of the torso and the general technique proves beyond doubt that these plaques are contemporary with, if not older than, those discovered at Pāhārpur and cannot be later than the sixth century A.D. One fragment shows that human figures reveal the existence of a modified form of acanthus motif in this distant corner of Assam. This device has been noticed in the Gupta temples at Bhumara, Nachnakuthara and Deogarh."[57] Dalton noticed from the ruins at Tezpur some urns of black pottery ornamented with flowers.[58] Specimens of earthen wares were discovered from the ruins of the Sadiyā region, which according to Hannay, bear close similarity to those found in the Gangetic valley.[59] Remains of ancient megalithic stone bridges have been discovered from the Jaintiā Hills, North Cāchār and other places. Most of these were made of a huge block or blocks of stone, requiring considerable engineering skill for their removal from one place to the other and permanent setting. One of the finest ancient specimens is from North Gauhāti, an early reference to which is made by the historians of the invasion of

56. *Ibid.*, 1906-7, pp. 25f.
56a. T. Bloch, *AR.A.S.I.*, 1906-7 pp. 25f.
57. R.D. Banerji, *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1925-26, pp. 115-16; Charu Chandra Das Gupta *J.A.S.B.*, (Letters), IV, pp. 67f; *The Age of the Imperial Guptas*, pp. 207-8.
58. *J.A.S.B.*, XXIV, pp. 12-17.
59. *J.A.S.B.*, XVII, I, pp. 459f.

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Bakhtiyar.[60] It is an extraordinary piece of stone work,[61] and "is of solid masonry, built without lime or mortar. There are no arches, the superstructure being a platform with a slight curve, 140 ft. long and 8ft. in breadth".[62] In the opinion of Hannay "the work is one of great strength and solidity. The design and style of architecture of this bridge evidently belongs to a remote period—and in its original structure at least must be coeval with the Brāhmaṇical temples, the remains of which we find so widely scattered throughout the length and breadth of Assam".[63]

Remains of ancient tanks, fortifications and embankments have been traced in places like Gauhāti, Tezpur, Ḍimāpur. Nowgong, Sadiyā and the like.[63a] A reference has already been made to a few fortifications in another connection. The fortress of *Agniparvata* in Tezpur, attributed to Bāṇa, throws "a side-light on the method of architecture or the skill of the masons in those far away days of antiquity."[64] Extensive ruins of an ancient fortification, known as Vaidargarh still lie in Betnā mouzā in Kāmarūpa, attributed to Ārimatta[65] (alias Vaidyadeva). In the Dhamdhamā mouzā in Kāmarūpa there are traces of another embankment, called Pheṅguāgarh, attributed to Pheṅguā. Pṛthu, another king of Kāmarūpa, built an extensive fortification as a defence against the invasion of Bakhtiyar in Jalpāiguri.[66]

A tank of the name of *Kubhāṇḍa*, minister of Bāṇa, still exists in Tezpur; *Harjjarapukhurī*, is anohter tank, paved with stones, recalling the name of the king Harjjara of the 9th century A.D.[67] At a little distance from the latter tank are the remains of stone temples, pillars and slabs and to the north-west of *Harjjarapukhurī* is another tank, known as *Balipukhurī*. All these, including the *Dighalī* tank at Gauhāti, belong to an early period.[68] There are a large number of tanks and earth

60. *Raverty*, I, pp. 569f.
61. *J.A.S.B.*, XXIV, pp. 1f.
62. Hannay, *J.A.S.B.*, XX, pp. 291-94.
63. *J.A.S.B.*, XX, pp. 291-94.
63a. The *Asurarāli* or earth embankment running parallel to the present Zoo road of Gauhati recalls its construction by Narakāsura. So is the *Momāikaṭā* garh on the north bank of the Brahmaputra at North Gauhati, which is evidently an old embankment, and which was probably the northern boundary of Prāgjyotiṣa, and was repaired under the direction of the Ahom general Lācit Barphukan during Āhom-Mughal conflicts.
64. P. Bhattachary, *J.A.S.B.*, V (N.S.), pp. 19-20.
65. A.C. Bhattacharya, *J.A.R.S.*, III, pp. 12f.
66. *Glazier's Report on the District of Rangpur*, p. 8.
67. S. Kataki, *I.H.Q.*, VI, pp. 364-72.
68. K.L. Barua, *J.A.R.S.*, II, pp.104-5.

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embankments in the Viśvanātha area, attributed to Ārimatta. The embankment ran from Pratāpapura to the Dafalā range for about 12 miles. There are other fortifications at the foot of the Dafalā Hills, consisting of stone walls, carved with marks resembling those at Sadiyā. Among the ruins at Pratāpgarh there are remains of earth embankments extending over miles. In the centre of the enclosure of about 2½ miles there is a large fort consisting of exceedingly high earth-works. It appears that this was the citadel of the town; to the north-east of the citadel is an enclosure of about 100 square ft. laid with bricks and with carved stones inside.[69] Similar remains of fortifications are lying at Mayapura and Ratnapura, ascribed to Rāmacandra. This is in confirmation of a Dafalā tradition that an ancient king of Assam built a fort there and it is said that Ārimatta attacked the fort and killed his father. Mayamatta or Rāmacandra's kingdom extended from Bhālukpong to Mājuli.[70] In the Sadiyā region there are similar remains of ramparts of stones, bricks and earth. These, like those at Viśvanātha and Ratnapura, "were intended to enclose the table land at the foot of the hills and thus form a place of refuge in times of invasion."[71] The whole work of the rampart, laid without cement or fastening, shows great skill in masonry and engineering. The ruins cover an area of about ten to twelve miles.

All these remains indicate that the masons, engineers and artisans of ancient Assam showed skill equal to that of the artists in the erection of their monuments and the execution of artistic designs.

4. Some important Sculptural designs :

As the foregoing description of the extensive remains proves, we have evidence of different structures and designs, such as domelike *stupas*, pyramidal roofs, *śikhara* and arch or *chaitya* window patterns, pillars, capitals, shafts, *āmalakas*, bases, foliages, rosettes, trefoils, floral designs like those of the lotus, acanthus, meandering creepers, scroll-work, geometrical designs and other devices depicting divine and human figures, animals, *makaras*, *kīrtimukhas*, birds, serpents, insects, etc. An attempt has been made to trace the origin of these various structures and designs, like *Viṣṇu's śikhara*, *Śiva's stupa*, associated also with Buddhist architecture,

69. W.N. Edwards and H.H. Mann, *J.A.S.B.*, 1904, I, pp. 254-261; W.N. Edwards, *J.A.S.B.*, 1904 (Extra No.), pp. 16-19; Dalton, *J.A.S.B.*, XXIV, pp. 20-21; Westmacott, *J.A.S.B.*, IV, pp. 190-91.

70. Dwarika Nath Das, *J.A.R.S.*, VIII, pp. 43-49.

71. Hannay, *J.A.S.B.*, XVII, I, pp. 459f.

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chaitya windows, etc. to the Vedic rituals, sacrificial altars and houses, mounds and the like.[72] In the opinion of Havell, Vedic thought, philosophy and rituals have determined the art and architecture of India. The *stupa*, for instance, is derived from Vedic rituals such the as *pitṛmedha*. The *śikhara* stands for the chimney at the top of the sacrificial chamber. It is derived from the bamboo construction, having its origin, like the *stupa*, in the valley of the Euphrates where a section of the Aryans once dwelt.[73] But opinion differs on the origin of these designs.[74] Whatever their origin, it is certain that the non-Aryans made a substantial contribution in the evolution of both architectural and sculptured designs.[75] This may be substantiated by the nature of the remains of Assam, we have described. Not only in the remains of places like Ḍimāpur and Sadiyā but also those from Tezpur, Nowgong and Deopānī, we have traced the influence of non-Aryan art.

Pyramidal domes and roofs, associated with the shrine of Śiva, as also with the Buddhist *stupa*, have been noticed among the temple ruins in South Kāmarūpa, remains on the bank of the Sesa river, Tezpur[76] and other areas. Miniature temples of the *śikhara* type are noticed in Kāmākhyā.[77] Stone architraves from Ākāśīgaṅgā and Sītājakhalā[78] in Nowgong show beautiful specimens of *śikhara* temple designs.

A *chaitya* window in its origin represents a shrine, particularly of the Buddhist, or place of worship or any image including a religious inscription;[79] the remains from Assam provide a number of instances of the

72. P.K. Acharya, *Hindu Architecture in India and Abroad*, pp. 44f; 409f; *Indian*
Architecture, pp. 7, 127-38; *Dictionary of Hindu Architecture*, pp. 588f; *I.C.*, VIII, pp.
89f; *I.C.*, I, pp. 393-94; *I.H.Q.*, I, pp. 188-218.
The Ideals of Indian Art,
73. Havell, *A Handbook of Indian Art* , pp. 7, 12-13, 56f;
Indian Architecture—
pp. 1f; *Ancient and Medieval Architecture of India*, pp. 42f; 63f;
Its Psychology etc., p. 98; C. Batley, *Architecture* (Oxford Pamphlets on Indian Affairs)
No. 35, pp. 20f.
74. See Smith, *Fine Art in India and Ceylon*, p. 23; Macdonell, *J.R.S.A.*, March,
1909. *Stupa* is undoubtedly associated with the remains of the Buddha.
Arts and
75. Kramrisch, *Ancient Indian Sculpture*, pp. 127f; A.K. Coomeraswamy,
A History of Indian and Indonesian Art, Chap. 1.
Crafts of India and Ceylon, p. 107;
76. Dalton, *J.A.S.B.*, XXIV, pp. 5-24.
77. *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1923-24, pp. 80-81.
78. *J.A.R.S.*, V, pp. 14f; *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1936-37, pp. 54f.
Codrington, *Ancient India*,
79. H. Kern, *Manual of Indian Buddhism*, pp. 21, 91;
Havell, *Ancient and Medieval Architec-*
p. 23; Smith, *Fine Art in India and Ceylon*, p. 23;
B.C. Law, *Geography of*
ture of India, pp. 63f; Dikṣhitar, *I.H.Q.*, XIV, pp. 440-51;
The *Chaitya*, like the
Early Buddhism (App.); Stevenson, *Heart of Jainism*, p. 280.
stupa, is Buddhist in origin.

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type. *Chaitya* window-patterns occur on many temple ruins. It is like the shape of a lotus leaf or the leaf of a pipal tree, standing symbolically for *Brahmā* or *Śiva*, and is associated with the figure of a deity,[80] both Hindu and Buddhist. *Chaitya* window patterns are shown on the door jambs of Dah Parvatiā. The central *chaitya* window from the place is the largest of all, which is occupied by the figure of *Śiva* and has a *Suparṇa*, a mythical deity on either side.[81] A slab from Tezpur bears on it a conventional representation of the *chaitya* window pattern.[82] Stone pieces of what are called *toraṇa* gateways are lying scattered in Deopāni; one consists of a pyramidal bracket with a bold design of sinuous lines; another is in the shape of a *śikhara*, formed by a *kīrtimukha* and foliage issuing from it. The third one shows a *śikhara* of foliage with *āmalaka* and lotus-bud finial flanked by deities.[83]

Opinion differs about the origin of the designs of pillars, āmalakas, capitals, shafts, abacus, vases, bases, etc., of which we find a large number from the scattered ruins with various ornamentations. Square shafted pillars are associated with the shrine of *Brahmā*, octagonal with that of *Viṣṇu* and circular or sixteen sided with *Śiva*.[84] Capitals represent the inverted petals of a lotus so as to enclose the fruit or the seed-vessel which has a special significance as the *hiraṇyagarbha* or the womb of the universe. The base stands for the sacred jar or the fruit of the lotus and just as the *śikhara* stands for *Viṣṇu's* shrine, representing the holy mount *Meru*, *āmalaka* is also 'the blue lotus of *Viṣṇu*.[85] The lotus is associated with all deities and used as an ornamentation in all sculptured specimens of Assam, as in other parts of India. It symbolises the idea of the divine birth.[86] It is perhaps unnecessary to ascribe the origin of the so called bell-shaped capital to Persian or Hellenistic influence, as done by some writers.[87] Not only the capital,[88] but also pillars, bases, shafts, etc. can

80. Havell, *Ancient and Medieval Architecture of India*, pp. 63f.
81. *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1924-25, pp. 94f.
82. *Ibid.*, 1924-25, pp. 94f.
83. *Ibid.*, 1936-37, pp. 54f.
84. Havell, *Ancient and Medieval Architecture of India*, pp. 55f. Octagonal pillars are also associated with a Buddhist shrine.
85. Havell, *Ancient and Medieval Architecture*, pp. 42f, 55f, 63f; *A Handbook of Indian Art*, pp. 42f.
86. Macdonell, *E.R E.*, VIII, pp. 142-44; Waddell, *Ibid.*, p. 144.
87. See Fergusson, *Indian and Eastern Architecture*, I, p. 59: Marshall, *Ibid.*, 56-61; A.K. Roy, *I.H.Q.*, V, pp. 693-99; R.L. Mitra, *Antiquities of Orissa*, I, p. 17; R. P. Chanda, *M.A.S.B.*, No. 41, pp. 34-35; A.K. Mitra, *I.H.Q.*, VII, pp. 213-44.
88. Coomeraswamy, *I.H.Q.*, VI, pp. 373-75; *Early Indian Iconography*, II; *Lakṣmī in Eastern Art*, I, pp. 178f; O.C. Ganguly, *I.H.Q.*, XI, p. 135.

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be explained with reference to the application of the lotus symbol. Havell's interpretation of the symbolism of these designs is appropriate; the vase forming the base of a pillar stands for cosmic water; the shaft is the stalk of the flower; the capital is the universe itself, unfolded by the petals of the sky; the fruit is *mokṣa* and the altar is the heaven.[89]

As we have stated, the lotus is associated with every work of sculpture, either as the *āsana* of deities or as ornamentation. This, as well as other floral designs, including the rosettes, foliages, meandering creepers, trefoil and scroll-work ornamentations are best illustrated by the extant remains. The floral patterns of the bands on the door jambs of Dah Parvatiā show their excellent execution. The upper part of each of the jambs is separated into narrow vertical bands. The first of these shows a meandering creeper with beautiful foliage in the interspaces, and the second of a straight vertical stem from which issue a number of lotus leaves and other flowers. The third band is made up of four superimposed panels bearing ornamental foliage. Each of the bands on the top ends in a vase with ornamental foliage hanging from its corner. The fourth band consists of a vertical row of ornamental rosettes.[90] The band on the left jamb from the Bāmuṇī Hills bears a meandering creeper patterns and that on the right a row of rosettes, alternately square and round showing excellent execution.[91] A band on a shaft of pillar from Tezpur contains a series of diamond-shaped rosettes. The door lintel from, Tezpur in its lower part depicts vertical bands containing meandering creepers and two others, consisting of rosettes. Some carved stones from Tezpur contain sunken panels containing ornamental rosettes and meandering creepers. The ornamentations in the plinth mouldings from the same place show diamond-shaped and circular rosettes.[92] On one side of the pit at Kāmākhyā, there is a slab with the beautiful carvings of a meandering creeper, issuing from the hands of a dwarf.[93] A stone piece from Ākāśīgaṅgā shows beautiful courses of rosaries over a *tilaka* design, placed in its line between two leaves.[94] A piece of a cornice from Āmtal shows the designs of bead and acanthus foliages.[95] The ceiling slab from Deopānī bears the artistically executed carving of an embossed lotus, and its seed vessel bears in relief the figure of a beautifully

89. *A Handbook of Indian Art*, pp. 42f.
90. *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1924-25, pp. 94f.
91. *Ibid.*, 1925-26, pp. 115-16.
92. *Ibid.*, 1924-25, pp. 90f.
93. *Ibid.*, 1923-24, pp. 100f.
94. *Ibid.*, 1936-37, pp. 54f.
95. *J.A.R.S.*, V, pp. 14f.

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executed *Vidyādhara*.[96] Stone fragments from Numaligarh show clusters of lotus bands with long stalks and a central full-bloom lotus, the whole issuing from a pond.[97] Some panels on the door jambs from the Bāmuṇī Hills show trefoil arch designs with lotus leaves and scroll-work mouldings and schematic tracery.[98] Stone pieces from Gosāijuri bear frontal friezes with the design of foliages inset between rosaries. Another pillar piece shows designs of *gavākṣas* (circle windows), surmounted by trefoils.[99]

Another important ornamentation is the geometrical design on the walls and jambs of temples. The design with its three sides stands symbolically for the three powers of will, knowledge and action or three aspects of the one, embodied in a divine form. The two triangles intersecting each other make the six petalled *padma* symbol of the mystic divine embrace, indicating the act of creation.[100] It is like the *Yantras* of the Tāntrik-Buddhists, who held a position of influence in this land. The motif occurs not only on the monoliths of the non-Aryan centres like Ḍimāpur, Kasomāri and Sadiyā,[101] but also in other Brāhmaṇical and Buddhist art. Dalton made an early reference to a ceiling decoration with this design in Tezpur, which bears a pattern of circles within circles.[102] The interior of the sunken panels from Tezpur is entirely covered with geometrical patterns with a half-rosette in the centre.[103]

In the execution of the divine, human, animal, bird and other figures the sculptors showed their sense of proportion and skill. A brief reference may be made to the *makara* and *kīrtimukha* design, so common in the sculptures of Assam, as in other parts of India. The origin of the motif is given in the *Skanda Purāṇa*.[104] A huge lintel from the Bāmuṇī Hills is ornamented with horned *kīrtimukhas*.[105] The shaft of one of the pillars from Tezpur is ornamented with *kīrtimukhas* at the top and the lower with dentils. The bands on the shaft of another pillar contain the same designs, and the carved stones from the same area are ornamented with *kīrtimukhas*.[106] The same motif is found in Yogījān and Chāṅgchauki,

96. *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1936-37, pp. 54f.
97. *Ibid.*
98. *Ibid.*, 1925-26, pp. 115-116; 1928-29 , p. 44.
99. *Ibid*, 1936-37, pp. 54f.
100. Havell, *Indian Sculpture and Painting*, pp. 29f.
101. Bloch, *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1904-5.
102. *J.A.S.B.*, XXIV, pp. 12-17.
103. *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1924-25, pp. 90f.
104. Basumatī (ed.), II, pp. 1182-1183.
105. *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1925-26, pp. 115-16.
106. *Ibid.*, 1924-25, pp. 90f.

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Śiṅgri and other places.[107] It is common also in Java and China.[108] Those from the ruins of Deopānī "bear a strong resemblance to the *kīrtimukhas* of Java, while those occurring on the coping pieces are remarkably akin to the Javanese ones and provide like the latter with eyes having horn-like sockets."[109] The *makara* ornamentation occurs on the *chaitya* windows from Dah-Parvatīā and other ruins.[110]

5. Icons :[110a]

The worship of deities in their iconographic forms goes back to an early period in India;[111] whatever its antiquity, both iconism and ani-conism went side by side, and even after the introduction of image worship, the deities were represented in their symbols, like the footprint or tree representing the Buddha, the *liṅga* and *yonī* for *Śiva* and *Devī*, etc. In Assam both these representations are found, and the earliest evidence of icons of the 5th century A.D. is known from the ruins of Dah Parvatīā and other places.

Ancient Indian texts mention icons of various deities in their different poses and *mudrās*,[112] and the specimens from Assam show almost all these varieties. Most deities are found with more than their usual heads and hands. This, however, is not inartistic, as explained by many art critics, but indicates the symbolic nature and attributes of deities, and the same symbolism lies in the weapons or articles held in their hands.[113]

107. *J.A.R.S.*, V, pp. 14f; IV, pp. 93f; V, pp. 109-112.

108. A. Marchall, *J.I.S.O.A.*, VI, pp. 97-105; Stütterheim, *Indian Art and Letters*, III, pp. 27-52.

109. *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1936-37, pp. 54f.

110. *Ibid.*, 1924-25, pp. 94f.

110a. The five principal deities, *Sūryya*, *Viṣṇu*, *Śiva*, *Durgā* and *Gaṇeśa* formed the nucleus of the image worship in India. This *Pañcāyatana* also stands for a group of five under one principal deity in the centre : (Sukla, *Vāstu Śāstra*, II, p. 32). In so far as Assam is concerned, the *Kālikā Purāṇa* gives a good idea about the iconographical representation of both Hindu and Buddhist deities.

111. See Marshall, *M.I.V.C.*, I, pp. 52-59, 66-67; Mackay, *Further Excavations at Mahenjodaro*, I, pp. 258-f, 336; Vats, *Excavations at Harappa*, I, pp. 42, 129, 304; Chanda, *Medieval Sculptures in the British Museum*, p. 9; Muir, *Sanskrit Texts*, pp. 453f; Keith, *Religion of the Vedas and Upaniṣads*, pp. 60f; Hopkins, *Religions of India*, pp. 370f; Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, I, I, 2; Bollenson, *J.G.O.S.*, XXII, pp. 587f; A.C. Das, *Rig Vedic Culture*, pp. 144-46; J. N. Banerjea, *Development of Hindu Iconography*, pp. 47-69; Venkatesvara, *J.R.A.S.*, 1917., pp. 587-92; 1918, 519-26; Bloomfield, *Religion of the Vedas*, p. 89.; D.N. Sukla, *Vāstu Śāstra*, II, p. 28.

112. See Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, I, I, Intro, pp. 14f.

113. Codrington, *Ancient India*, Intro., p. 5; Kramrisch, *Ancient Indian Sculpture*, p. 7; Venkatesvara, *I.H.Q.*, III, pp. 298f; Coomeraswamy, *M.R.*, 1912, pp. 482f; Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, I, I, Intro., pp. 27-30; Havell, *Ideals of Indian Art*, Intro, XVIII, 67; *Handbook of Indian Art*, pp. 162f.

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It will appear that most of the icons are not based on every detail, given in the texts, and, like the architectural designs and sculptures, they are sometimes represented independently of the texts.[114] Moreover, their representation varied from place to place, according to such local usages as are described, as for instance, in the *Bṛhatsaṁhitā*. This is explained by different icons of the State. In view of the damaged condition of most of the images, it is impossible to ascribe a definite date to them, and some of our identification may not be accurate.

(a) *Icons of the Buddha* : The Buddhist remains from ancient Assam are no doubt few, and only a few icons of the Buddha have been discovered. None the less, the statement of B.K. Barua that the Buddhist faith did not prevail in the land and that archaeology has not produced any evidence of importance,[115] is not supported by the existing materials. We have already shown, (vide on religion) on the basis of both literature and remains, that the faith existed in Kāmarūpa.

(i) One *āsana* variety of the defaced figure of the *Buddha*, engraved on a stone having the shape of a *stupa* lying to the left side of the old path leading from the Kāmākhyā temple below, just near a tree, which appears to be a sprout of an old Bodhi tree. The icon with two hands is in his *bhūmisparśa mudrā*.

(ii) One *sthānaka* variety of *Bodhisattva*, with two hands and a *mukuṭa* and *hāra*. The icon is exquisitely beautiful, and is now lying near the animal slaughter house at Kāmākhyā. Both the specimens can be ascribed to the *Mahāyāna* period of Buddhism.

(iii) Two other icons of the Buddha ascribed to the 10th-11th century A.D. have been found. One of them is a distinct image on a thin stone slab, showing *abhaya mudrā*;[116] this aspect of the Buddha, according to texts, belongs to *Amogha Siddhi*, one of the five *Buddhas* in *dhyāna*, born of *Ādi Buddha* (male) and *Ādi Prajñā* (female) principles.[117] The second specimen is a terra cotta votive tablet with the image of the Buddha stamped on it in his *bhūmisparśa mudrā*;[118] this aspect of the deity is called *Akṣo-*

114. Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, I, I, Intro., pp. 47-48; J. N. Banerjea, *Hindu Iconography*, pp. 1-18; A. Tagore, *Some Notes on Indian Artistic Anatomy*, p. 3; *M.R.*, 1912, pp. 482-84; Smith, *I.A.*, XLIV, pp. 90-91.

115. *Cultural History of Assam*, I, pp. 161.

116. P.D. Chaudhury, *J.A.R.S.*, 1944, pp. 39f; *E.H.K.*, pp. 155-56.

117. N.K. Bhattasali, *Iconography of the Buddhist and Hindu Sculptures in the Dacca Museum*, pp. 16f.

118. P.D. Chaudhury, *J.A.R.S.*, 1944, pp. 39f; *E.H.K.*, pp. 155-56.

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bhya.[119] There are besides some rock-cut images and sculptures representing the Buddha. In Pañcaratna Hills (Goālparā) two figures of the deity in his *bhūmisparśa mudrā* have been noticed.[120] In *Urvaśī* there is a crude rock-cut image of the Buddha, seated on a *padmāsana*, showing *bhūmisparśa mudrā*,[121] and some figures of the Buddha in *dhyāna* are noticed from the temple ruins of other places.[122] It is certain, however, that excavations would bring to light more images of the Buddha.

(b) *Brahmā images*: *Brahmā* is symbolical of the rising sun, and his active principle is *Sarasvatī* whose lotus petals open at the touch of the rising sun, and her lotus stands for the *hiraṇyagarbha*, hidden in the depth of the ocean from which Brahmā is said traditionally to have sprung. Iconographically he is shown seated in *yoga* upon the lotus and riding on a swan. His four heads facing the four quarters stand for the four *Vedas*, four *yugas* and four *varṇas*.[123] The following specimens of the images of the deity have so far been discovered :

(i) One black stone image from Gauhāti, standing on a pedestal, decorated with lotus petals with his *vāhana*, the swan. He is wearing a sacred thread and a *jaṭāmukuṭa* on his head, having four heads and four hands, the upper right hands holding weapons, but the lower ones are broken. There are two female attendants, one on either side and at the top there is a *kīrtimukha* and flying *vidhyādharas* on either side.[124] The sculpture is based on the details of the texts; the consorts are probably *Sarasvatī* and *Sāvitrī*, as given in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*.

(ii) Another image of the deity is preserved in the Gauhāti Museum. It has eight hands, seated on a *padmāsana* in *yoga* with a swan below paying homage to the deity. The palm of one of the lower left hands exhibits the *varadā mudrā* and one of the right shows the *abhaya*. One right hand is holding the sacrificial ladle and the other a sacrificial spoon. The details are in keeping with the texts.[125]

(iii) A panel from the Tezpur ruins contains a beautiful standing figure of the deity with attendants on either side, having a long beard

119. N.K. Bhattasali, *Iconography, etc.*, pp. 16f.
120. S. Kataki, *J.A.R.S.*, April 1934.
121. K.L. Barua, *J.A.R.S.*, II, pp. 104-5.
122. Dalton, *J.A.S.B.*, XXIV, pp. 21f.
123. Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, II, II, pp. 503f; Havell, *Handbook of Indian Art*, pp. 162f.
124. S. Kataki, *J.A.R.S.*, IX, pp. 88-92.
125. Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, II, II, pp. 503f.

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and wearing a long conical cap.[126] The *Rūpamaṇḍana* prescribes beards for Brahmā;[127] so the representation is not unusual. The consorts here again are *Sarasvatī* and *Sāvitrī*.

(*c*) *Sūryya images:* According to texts, the deity should be represented with two hands, each holding a lotus and surrounded by a halo, wearing a *karaṇḍa mukuṭa* on his head, *kuṇḍalas*, *hāras* and a sacred thread. He should stand on a *padmāsana* or be placed in a chariot drawn by seven horses, and on his sides should be placed *Uṣā* and *Pratyuṣā*. Some texts prescribe four consorts, while still others state that there should be a *dvārapāla* on either side. The *Matsya Purāṇa* prescribes four hands, holding usual weapons, wearing ornaments and attended by *Daṇḍa* and *Piṅgala*.[128]

The following specimens of the deity are important :

(i) A sandstone image of the deity from Gahpur with two hands holding lotuses, in front of which are seven horses. At the centre there is a wheel with a horse inside. There are other attendants of the deity.[129] The details approximately correspond to those in the texts.

(ii) One beautiful image of the deity, found on one of the *chaitya* windows from Dah Parvatiā, ascribed to the 5th-6th century A. D. He is seated cross-legged and holding lotuses in both his hands, with an attendant on his left holding a pen and an inkpot , and on his right there is another holding a staff of the orthodox description.[130] The attendants are perhaps *Daṇḍa* and *Piṅgala*.

(iii) One rock-cut image of *Sūryya* from Pāṇḍu.[131]

(iv) One carved image of the deity was noticed near Sadiyā in a chariot drawn by seven horses.[132]

126. *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1924-25, pp. 94f.
127. Rao, II. II, pp. 503f.
128. *Ibid.*, I, II, pp. 302f.
129. S.C. Goswami and P.D. Chaudhury, *J.A.R.S.*, X, 35-37; another mutilated image of the deity was found by the author at Bhogbāri, Mangaldoi, and has since been handed over to the State Museum at Gauhati. The image, carved in a block of stone appears along with his attendants on a carriage drawn by seven horses. The find possibly belongs to about 9th-10th century A.D. sculpture or to the period of the remains of Bāmuṇī Hills, Tezpur and Gahpur with whom the present image seems to have affinities.
130. *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1924-25, pp. 94f.
131. Dikshit, *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1923-24, pp. 80-81.
132. *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1905, p. 4.

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(v) The central panel of stone lintel of the sun temple at Tezpur contains a beautiful image of the deity with two attendants. The sculpture may be ascribed to the 8th century A. D.[133]

(vi) A fine representation of the deity is found engraved in the rock behind the temple of Śukreśvara (Gauhati), standing with two hands and holding lotus in both, and wearing *kirīṭa-mukuṭa*, *kuṇḍalas*, *hāras*, girdle, *uttarīya vastra*, sacred thread and boots on his feet. The deity is on a carriage, drawn by seven horses, and appears along with *Viṣṇu*, *Śiva*, *Gaṇeśa* and *Durgā*. Similar image in bronze was found at Narakāsura Hills. In point of style and execution, the sculpture may be ascribed to the 9th century A. D., if not earlier.

(vii) Similar sculptures are noticed in the Sūryya Pāhār.

(viii) Another beautiful image of *Sūryya* is found in the temple of Śuālkuchi. The deity is in his conventional style and can be ascribed to an early period. The temple itself may originally have been a *Sūryya* temple.

(d) *Images of Viṣṇu and His Incarnations:* Viṣṇu was represented under various names, and in different positions, such as *sthānaka*, *āsana* and *śayana*, classified into *yoga*, *bhoga*, *vīra* and *ābhicārika* varieties, each having again *uttama*, *madhyama* and *adhama* representations. The deity has twenty-four incarnations, each having different attributes;[134] the specimens from Assam include most of these forms. He is often represented carrying *śaṅkha*, *cakra*, *gadā* and *padma*, called *Āyudhapuruṣas* or minor incarnations of gods.[135] Symbolically, *Viṣṇu* stands for *ākāśagarbha* or the sun at midday and midnight, reposing on the coils of the eternal serpent. He is often represented as a warrior with his usual weapons and the *vāhana*, *Garuḍa*.[136] His active principle is *Lakṣhmī* or *Uṣā*. His four usual hands symbolise the rays of the sun. His *sthānaka* variety symbolises the pillar of the universe or the holy mount *Meru*.[137] His *śaṅkha* indicates pride and destroys ignorance; *cakra* is the wheel of life and the destroyer of all enemies; *gadā* stands for intelligence and destroys *adharma*, and his blue lotus

133. R.D. Banerji, *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1924-25, pp. 94f.
134. Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, I, 1, pp. 73f. 227f.
135. See Rao, *Ibid*, pp. 287f.
136. Mythologically *Garuḍa* is the son of *Kāśyapa* and *Vinatā* and represents the sun, associated with *Viṣṇu*. (Rao, *Ibid.*, pp. 283f).
137. Havell, *Handbook of Indian Art*, pp. 162f.

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stands for the *viśvapadma*.[138] The following specimens of the deity are important:

(i) A fine representation of *Viṣṇu* in his *sthānaka* variety is found at Deopānī. The image contains an inscription of four lines in characters similar to those of the Tezpur inscription of Harjjara of the 9th century A.D. The deity has four hands, the left upper hand holding a *śaṅkha* and the lower left a *gadā*. He has all the usual ornaments, the *kaustubha*, *śrīvatsa* symbol on the breast, the sacred thread and a garland reaching to the knees. There appears to be an influence of the non-Aryans on the sculpture. This is proved by the "expression of the face and the treatment of the lower lip". This is confirmed by the fact that the find-spot of the icon lies closer to Ḍimāpur and Kasomārī "where still exist the ruins of the peculiar culture associated with the Kachāris".[139]

(ii) Two other *Viṣṇu* images from *Deopānī*: One has four hands, the upper right is in *varadā* and the left holding a *śaṅkha;* the lower right is holding a *cakra* and the left a *gadā*. The other image also has four hands, the upper right holding a *cakra*, and the left a *gadā*, the lower right a lotus and the left a *śaṅkha*.[140]

(iii) Another *Viṣṇu* image from the Gauhāti Museum is the standing figure of the deity in black basalt. In the back right hand, he is holding a *gadā*, the back left a cakra (?) and he holds the *śaṅkha* and *padma* in his front right and left hands. The image is mutilated. This aspect of *Viṣṇu* is called *Trivikrama*.[141]

(iv) One *sthānaka* variety in bronze from Dibrugarh has four hands, all of which are in the *tribhaṅga* pose and the *kartarī mudrā*. The deity is standing on *bhadrāsana*, wearing a short close-fitting loin cloth, *makarakuṇḍalas*, *mukuṭa* and sandals. Of the two female attendants, the one on the right holds a bud and a dagger (?) and the other on the left has her hands in a dancing posture. They are probably *Lakṣmī* and *Sarasvatī*. The image is a fine specimen of bronze art of the 11th-12th century A.D.[142]

(v) Figures of *Viṣṇu* from various ruins: One figure is found on an architrave from Mahādeocal; three small figures with four hands,

138. Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, I, I, pp. 287f.
139. Dikṣhit, *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1923-24, pp. 80-81; *E.I.*, XVIII, 329-30; R.M. Nath, *J.A.R.S.* VIII, pp. 130-34.
140. R.M. Nath, *J.A.R.S.*, VIII, pp. 130-34.
141. C.f. Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, I, I, p. 227f.
142. Dikshit, *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1923-24, pp. 80-81.

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holding *śaṅkha*, *cakra*, *gadā*, and *padma* are found on a stone slab from Chāṅgchauki; a few specimens from Mahāmāyāthān and three sets of *Viṣṇu, Lakṣmī and Sarasvatī* on a lintel from Buḍhāgosāithān.[143]

(vi) A stone pillar piece from Numaligarh shows an image of the deity in his *āsana* variety with four hands, seated in *rājalīlā* pose on a *padmāsana*, the upper hands holding *gadā* and *śaṅkha* and the lower right in *upadeśa mudrā;* the lower left is holding a rosary and *kuṇḍalas* adorn his ears.[144]

(vii) A number of *Viṣṇu* images in different poses have been found along with a large number of those including *Agni*, *Śiva*, *Durgā*, *Gaṇeśa*, *Jama*, *Vasundharī*, *Mahiṣāsura*,etc., at Narakāsura Hill. Among them there is a beautiful icon of *Viṣṇu* with four hands, holding the usual weapons, attended by *Lakṣmī* and *Sarasvatī* and with *Garuḍa* kneeling in front at the base of the image. The image is of bronze.[145]

(viii) A beautiful specimen of the *śayana* variety of *Viṣṇu*[146] of exquisite workmanship is still to be seen in the temple of *Aśvakrānta*, North Gauhāti. Inside the temple there is a *Garuḍāsana*, and on each corner of the throne there are kneeling figures, having the heads of birds, representing *Garuḍas*. The image is carved on a black stone, having four hands and sleeping on the hoods of a serpent. The lower left hand is thrown on the body of the serpent and the lower right is stretched along the right thigh. *Brahmā* is shown seated on a lotus issuing from the navel of *Viṣṇu*. *Mahāmāyā* and two demons, *Madhu* and *Kaiṭabha*, are shown standing on one corner. The female kneeling figures on his feet are *nāgīs*. The sculpture is surrounded by a *prabhāmaṇḍala*. The carving indicates the theory of creation.[147] The variety is either *bhoga* or *viṣmaya śayanamūrti* of *Viṣṇu*, with a slight variation in details.[148]

(ix) A number of icons show *Viṣṇu* in his different incarnations, of which the most common is the *Vāsudeva* variety. Texts give a detailed description of this aspect. A stone piece from *Gosāijuri* shows the deity standing in *samabhaṅga*, wearing *kirīṭamukuṭa*, *patrakuṇḍalas* and *hāras*, one with an attached *kaustubha* pendant. The upper hands and the lower left are missing. The lower right is in *varadā* and holding a *padma*.

143. R.M. Nath *J.A.R.S.*, V, pp. 14f.
144. *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1936-37. pp. 54f.
145. P.C. Choudhury, *J.A.R.S.*, XVI, pp. 57-59.
146. For *anantaśayī Viṣṇu* varieties of images, see Sukla, *Vāstu Śāstra*, II, pp. 197-99.
147. Gurdon, *J.R.A.S.*, 1900, pp. 25-27.
148. Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, I, I, pp. 73f.

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The *vanamālā* is arranged as in the Deopānī *Viṣṇu* image with which the sculpture is related; *Śrī* and *Sarasvatī* are standing on either side in *tribhaṅga* and both wearing *kirīṭamukuṭas*, *patrakuṇḍalas*, *hāras* with pendants, *aṅgadas* and wristlets. *Śrī* is holding a rosary and *Sarasvatī* is showing *abhaya* by her right hand and holding a lyre in her left.[149] The variety is taken to be of *Vāsudeva-Viṣṇu*.[150]

(x) Another fragmentary image from the same area shows the deity wearing *patrakuṇḍalas*, *aṅgada*, *kirīṭamukuṭa* and the upper right hand holding a *gadā* as in Bengal and Bihar sculptures. The deity has a halo with dentil edge which shows a carving of a hovering *vidyādhara* with a scarf held in his hands in the ethereal regions, indicated by a circle with indented edges as in *Pāla* representations.[151]

(xi) Another fragment from the same area shows the deity holding a *padma* by the stalk as in Bihar sculptures.[152]

(xii) In Ḍavāka the image of *Vāsudeva* is shown with his consorts *Lakṣmī* and *Sarasvatī*.[153]

(xiii) The stone image of the deity from Tarāvasā is mutilated. He is wearing a *mukuṭa*, and at its bottom there is a carved halo; *kuṇḍalas* adorn his ears. On the top of the image there are two flying *vidyādharas* playing on horned flutes, and just below them are two small *gandharvas*, the right one with wings, playing on a flute and the left one is dancing.[154]

(xiv) Another interesting variety of the deity is shown seated on a serpent under a canopy of its hoods. The icon is engraved on a stone slab and put into a socket in one side of the *Maṭha* at Śukreśvara. The legs are resting on the coiled body of the serpent; the front hands are holding *śaṅkha* and *cakra* and the back ones, *gadā* and *padma*.

(xv) From various places of Nowgong, groups of *Vāsudeva* images are found with his consorts. The image from Ākāśigaṅgā ruins is shown seated, with *Lakṣmī* and *Sarasvatī* standing on either side.

149. *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1936-37, pp. 54f.
150. R.M. Nath, *J.A.R.S.*, V, pp. 14f.
151. *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1936-37, pp. 54f.
152. *Ibid.*
153. *JA.R.S.*, V, pp. .14f
154. *J.A.R.S.*, VIII, pp. 85f.

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(xvi) A block of stone from Mikirāti shows a portion of the deity with flying *vidyādharas* at the top with folded hands. The image appears to be a colossal sculpture of *Vāsudeva*.

(xvii) A door piece from Mahādeocal shows a carved figure of *Vāsudeva*.[155]

(xviii) Sets of *Vāsudeva* images are found from Phulanī and Dīghalpānī. The central figure is that of a *Viṣṇu-Vāsudeva* with his attendants. In between the Vāsudeva panels, there are small panels with the figure of a *Vāsudeva*, seated on a *padmāsana*.[156]

(xix) A stone frieze from Baḍgaṅgā depicts the deity on a pedestal with *Lakṣmī* and *Sarasvatī* and *Jayā* and *Vijayā* on either side of the latter.[157]

(xx) A fine specimen of the *Janārdana* aspect of *Viṣṇu* is found on a rock behind the Śukreśvara temple, Gauhāti. The deity is 6 ft. 5 ins. in height. The representation indicates also the *Nārāyaṇa* aspect of *Viṣṇu*. The figure is shown seated with his four hands, holding usual weapons and legs cross-wise in the *vajraparyaṅka mudrā*. *Guraḍa* is shown below the *āsana*. The figures of *Gaṇeśa* and *Sūryya* are shown on the right side and those of *Śiva* and ten armed *Durgā* on the left of the image. The representation is perhaps intended to show *Viṣṇu* in the centre of the *Pañcadevatās*.[157a]

(xxi) Specimens of the deity as *Kṛṣṇa* are found in different places. Nine images of the deity are noticed from the temple ruins at *Chārduār*, playing on flutes as *Muralīdharā* or *Veṇugopāla* with attendants on either side.[158] Images of *Kṛṣṇa* along with *Balarāma* and *Subhadrā* were noticed from the temple of *Jagannātha* at Khetrī.[159] *Kṛṣṇa* as *Veṇugopāla* is seen sculptured on the western gateway of the Kāmākhyā temple; the deity is wearing a necklace of beads and an undergarment with central and lateral

155. *J.A.RS.*, V, pp. 14f.
156. *J.A.R.S.*, VIII, pp. 85f.
157. *J.A.R.S.*, V, pp. 14f.
157a. The conception centering round the sculpture is very old as this group of five principal deities constituted the nucleus of the image worship in India. This is called *Pañcāyatana*, standing also for five under one principal deity at the centre. The principal deity here is *Viṣṇu* himself : (see D.N. Sukla, *Vāstu Śāstra* II, p. 32.)
158. *J.A.S.B.*, IV, pp. 186f.
159. S. Kataki, *I.H.Q.*, VI , pp. 364f.

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tassels adorning his body. The head-dress is a conical cap, in the shape of flames. The sculpture "is a rare specimen of anatomical perfection".[160]

(xxii) A stone frieze from Deoparvat depicts the story of the *Rāma* incarnation of *Viṣṇu* with his brother *Lakṣmaṇa* and other figures.[161] Martin found traces of a temple at Kaldoba (Dhubri), dedicated to *Rāma*.[162]

(xxiii) A fine specimen of the *Bhū-Varāha* incarnation has also been discovered. The deity has the face of a boar and the body of a man; the right leg is slightly bent and made to rest on the head of the *Ādiśeṣa* (serpent).

(xxiv) From the ruins of Chārduār, figures of *Matsyāvatāra* and other incarnations were noticed like those at Tezpur.[163]

(xxv) A sculpture from Kāmākhyā depicts the story of the *Madhusūdana* incarnation of *Viṣṇu*, who, according to texts, is said to have assumed this form to kill the demon, *Madhu*.

(xxvi) The temple at Hājo contains the images of the *Hayagrīva*, *Mādhava*, *Narasiṁha* and the Buddha incarnations of *Viṣṇu*.[164]

(xxvii) The *Narasiṁha* figure from Gauhāti shows him in his *ugra* aspect. The lion-head has a long mane and fine ornamentations; the deity has four hands, and with the front ones he is shown piercing *Hiraṇyakaśipu* who is depicted lying on his thigh. Another broken figure is shown standing on a *padmāsana*; the demon is disembowelled on the thigh of the deity.

(xxviii) The central panel from Bāmuṇī Hill remains contains the figures of *Narasiṁha*, *Paraśurāma*, *Balarāma*, *Varāha* and *Rāma* incarnations.[165]

(xxix) Like those at Tezpur, the ten *avatāras* are found engraved on the rock at Urvaśī.[166]

(e) *Śiva images* : The icons of *Śiva* are found in his *sthānaka*, *āsana* and *nṛtya* postures, sometimes with his consort, but on most occa-

160. Ramachandran, *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1936-37, pp. 54f.
161. *Ibid.*
162. *Eastern India*, III, p. 473.
163. *J.A.S.B.*, IV, pp. 186f.
164. *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1903, p. 18.
165. *Ibid*, 1925-26, pp. 115-116.
166. K.L. Barua, *J.A.R.S.*, II, pp. 104-105.

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sions he is sculptured independently. Texts deal with various aspects of the deity.[167] *Śiva* represents the destructive and the procreative power of the world and has the setting sun and the waning moon as his emblems. He is often sculptured as the great *yogī*. As a dancing *Śiva*, he is a symbol of the lord of creation and destruction, and *Bhairava* signifies his terrible aspect. His *vāhana*, the *Nandi*, stands both for the principle of procreation and spiritual aspect of *Śiva*. The Ganges coming out of his *jaṭā* is associated with purity.[168] His *triśūla* stands for the three *guṇas* of *Prakṛti;* his *paraśu* is his divine strength, *khaḍga*, his valour, and *agni* symbolises his destructive power.[169] The following specimens of the deity are important :

(i) An image of the deity in his aspect of *Lakulīśa Śiva* is sculptured on a *chaitya* window from Dah Parvatīā, seated with a rope tied round his leg. A female is holding a cup to his left and another standing to his right.[170]

(ii) A fine specimen of the *Maheśa* aspect of *Śiva* is found at Gauhāti. According to texts, he should have five heads, each having three eyes, ten arms and two legs; two right hands should be in *varadā* and *abhaya* and the remaining four holding *śūla*, *paraśu*, *vajra* and *khaḍga*; the left ones should hold *kheṭaka*, *aṅkuśa*, *pāśa* and *ghaṇṭā*. He should wear silk garments, secred thread and ornaments. By his side should be *Śakti* with three eyes, and four arms, two in *varadā* and *abhaya* and the other two holding *nīlotpala* and *akṣamālā*.[171] The present image is within a full-bloom lotus, The deity has exactly five heads and ten hands seated in his *dhyānāsana*. Two of his hands are in *varadā* and *abhaya* and holding in one of his right hands a *śūla* and an *aṅkuśa* in one of his left. He is wearing a *jaṭa*, *hāra*, *keyūra*, *kaṅkaṇa*, *kuṇḍala*, sacred thread and other ornaments. *Nandi* is depicted below.[172]

(iii) K.N. Dikṣhit noticed a ten-armed *Śiva* on a stone-slab in a private residence at Gauhāti and another four-armed *Śiva* image holding a *ḍamaru*, trident, *gadā* and rosary in his hands, flanked by female attendants.[173]

167. See Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, II, I, pp. 105.
168. Havell, *The Ideals of Indian Art*, p. 67; *Handbook of Indian Art*,, pp. 162f.
169. Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, I, I, pp. 287f.
170. *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1924-25, pp. 94f.
171. Rao, II, II, pp. 379f.
172. *J.R.A.S.*, VI, pp. 101f.
173. *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1917-18, p. 50; 1920-21, pp. 37-38.

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(iv) A panel from Tezpur shows the deity with two hands standing in his *samapāda-sthānaka* pose.[174] According to texts, this is the *Īśāṇa* aspect of *Śiva*. The *Rūpamaṇḍana* states that he should have a colour like crystal with a *jaṭā* and *chandrakalā*, the hands carrying *akṣamālā*, *triśūla*, *kapāla*, one of them showing *abhaya*.[175]

(v) From the ruins at Nowgong, various aspects of the deity are found. In Mikir-āti we have a seated figure of the deity on his *Nandi*. From Gāchtal we find a *sthānaka* variety with a rosary in his right hand and a trident in his left and another with four hands seated on *yogāsana*.[176] Panels from Ākāśīgaṅgā show figures of *dhyānī Śiva*, and one beautiful sculpture as *Śūlapāṇi* appears from the same area showing *abhaya*, with two attendants, one holding a *cāmara* and the other with her hands in *añjali*, standing with bent knees on the back of an elephant.[177] Another image from Deopānī with two hands is indistinct.[178]

(vi) *Śiva* as *Bhairava* is found in different places. According to texts, he assumed this form to cut off the fifth head of Brahmā.[179] The image from Madana-Kāmadeva Parvat shows this aspect of the deity by the side of a *liṅga* with four arms, wearing a garland of skulls round his waist and an image of *Nandi*.[180] Two rock-cut figures of *Bhairava* are found in Kāmākhyā, one with eight hands and the other with four, shown with a flabby belly, a garland of skulls, and flames coming out of his head. The deity is without garments and standing on a prostrate body.[181]

(vii) *Śiva* as *Naṭarāja* (*nṛtya mūrti*) is found from several places. This aspect of *Śiva* is one of the best creations of the artists, and he dances the dance of the cosmic rhythm, beating the time beat of the universe.[182] The deity in this aspect should have ten hands, and as given in the *Matsya Purāṇa*, (259,4) the right hands should carry *khaḍga*, *śakti*, *daṇḍa* and *triśūla* and the left *kheṭaka*, *kapāla*, *nāga* and *khaṭvāṅga*. Of the two remaining hands, one should show *varadā* and the other hold

174. *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1924-25, pp. 94f.
175. Rao, II, II, p. 376.
176. *J.A.R.S.*, V, pp. 14f.
177. *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1936-37, pp. 54f.
178. *J.A.R.S.*, VIII, pp. 130-34.
179. Rao, II, I, pp. 174f.
180. T.K. Sarma, *J.A.R.S.*, X, pp. 82-83.
181. *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1923-24, pp. 80-81; 1930-34, p. 129.
182. Codrington, *Ancient India*, Intro, p. 5; Havell, *Indian Sculpture and Painting*. pp. 29f; Rao, II, II, p. 249.

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a rosary. He should be shown mounted on the *Nandi*. An unfinished image of *Śiva* on a stone slab from Deoparvat, though dancing, shows his aspect of *Tripurāri*, with four hands, the main ones holding bow and arrow with a tiara on his head and circular *patrakuṇḍalas* in ears.[183] According to texts, *Śiva* assumed this form to kill the three sons of *Tārakāsura*.[184]

(viii) The image from Gauhāti Waterworks has ten hands, seated on a bull, as given in the texts.[185]

(ix) An image of *Naṭarāja Śiva* with a single head and six hands was found in the Bāmuṇī Hill remains.[186]

(x) A beautiful specimen of dancing *Śiva* was found on the bank of the Brahmaputra near Gauhāti. The image is carved on a stone with a circular border with floral designs. He is dancing on *Nandi*, having ten hands, the left foot resting on the bull and the right one is raised in a dancing pose. The bull is wearing a *ghaṇṭā*.

(xi) Another interesting sculpture is the *Andhakāsuravadha* aspect of *Śiva*, preserved in the Gauhāti Museum. The deity is shown with three eyes and four hands; he is holding a *triśūla* by two of his hands and piercing the *asura*; the lower left hand is holding a *kapāla*. The whole story of the killing of the demon, as given in the texts, is beautifully depicted.[187]

(xii) One rare specimen of sculpture is the joint icon of either *Hari-Hara* or *Śiva-Viṣṇu* from North Gauhāti, now preserved in the Gauhāti Museum. The figure has two attendants, one on either side. The right part of the image is holding *triśūla* and *ḍamaru* representing *Śiva*, and the left one, with *karaṇḍamukuṭa* is holding *cakra* and *gadā*, representing *Viṣṇu*. The sculpture is well-executed and is a fine illustration of the union of two cults, confirmed by inscriptions, in the religious history of Assam.

(xiii) A composite figure of *Ardhanārīśvara Śiva* was found from Maṭhorbari.[188] The mutilated condition of the image makes it difficult

183. *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1936-37, p. 54f.
184. Rao, II, II, pp. 164f.
185. K.L. Barua, *J.A.R.S.*, II, pp. 104-5.
186. *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1925-26, pp. 115-16.
187. Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, II, I, pp. 192f.
188. *J.A.R.S.*, VI, pp. 34f.

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to give a detailed description of the deity.[189] The specimen indicates the influence of the Tāntrik Buddhist faith. This unified aspect of the deity is also given in some records.

(xiv) The *Umā-Maheśvara* aspect of *Śiva* as given in the texts,[190] is not rare in Assam. A fine specimen is noticed among the Tezpur ruins. *Śiva* with four hands is embracing Umā by one of his right hands, holding a trident by the other, with *jaṭāmukuṭa* and *patrakuṇḍalas*. *Umā* is seated by his side with her left leg pendent.[191] An exactly similar specimen is found at Baḍgaṅgā; at the foot of *Umā* are *Nandi* and a lion, the former with folded hands. *Bhṛṅgi* lies at the foot of *Śiva* and both the deities have consorts.[192] From Deopānī a beautiful image was found; *Umā* is seated on *Śiva's* thigh, holding in her upper right hand a trident and in the lower right a lotus, the upper left a shield and the lower left is in *varadā*. She is wearing a snake round her neck, a necklace of jewels and a close fitting garment.[193] Such sculptures may be attributed to the influence of Tāntrikism.[194]

(f) *Icons of the Devī : Śakti images : Śakti* was represented under various forms, such as *Umā, Durgā, Cāmuṇḍā, Caṇḍī, Mahiṣāmardinī*, etc. She was represented both independently and as a consort of *Śiva* and sometimes with her own attendants, *Gaṇeśa* and *Kārtikeya*. As given in the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*, she took different names after killing different demons. She became *Mahiṣāmardinī* for killing *Mahiṣāsura*, *Cāmuṇḍā* for killing *Śumbha* and *Niśumbha* and *Durgā* for killing *Durgamāsura*. Nine forms of *Durgā* are given in the *Āgamas*, of which *Mahiṣāmardinī* is one. The texts give details of this aspect of the deity.[195] The following specimens of *Durgā* are important :

(i) The *Mahiṣāmardinī Durgā* from the temple of Hātīmurā (Nowgong) compares well with the details of the *Āgamas*. The deity has ten hands, holding a number of weapons with a slender waist and broad breasts. She is placing her right leg on the lion and pressing the shoulder of the *Mahiṣāsura* with the left. She is holding a trident, piercing the body of the *asura*. The representation of the lion is similar to that of the Tezpur ruins of the 9th-10th century A. D. A big sword, probably

189. See Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, II, I, pp. 321f.
190. *Ibid.*
191. *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1924-25, pp. 94f.
192. *J.A.R.S.*, V, pp. 14f.
193. *Ibid.*, VIII, pp. 130-34.
194. Figures of *Śiva* are also seen on the temple rocks at Umānanda and Urvaśī (*A.R.A.S.I.*, 1924-25, p. 101; *J.A.R.S.*, II,104-5; *J.A.S.B.*, XXIV pp. 4-5).
195. Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, pp. 345f.; also *Yoginī Tantra*, II/7.

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used for sacrifice, was found in the place. It is likely that the sculpture, associated with the Tāntrik worship of the temple, which was dedicated to *Durgā*, belongs to the 9th-10th century A. D.[196]

(ii) The *Mahiṣāmardinī* from the Bhoi Parvat (Nowgong) shows a slight variation from her usual representation. She is in *tribhaṅga* with her right leg on the back of the beheaded *Mahiṣāsura* and the left on the lion. A number of weapons are held in her hands; she is wearing a crown, a *hāra*, and a set of girdles on the waist. The sculpture is ascribed to the 9th century A. D.[197]

(iii) Another variety of the deity is that of *Cāmuṇḍā* from Nabhaṅgā. The *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* relates that *Kālī* took the name of *Cāmuṇḍā* after killing *Caṇḍa* and *Muṇḍa*. The *Devī Purāṇa* (37,17), referring to the killing of *Ruṣu*, describes the origin of *Cāmuṇḍā*. According to the *Mātribheda Tantra*, (VI), *Cāmuṇḍā* is worshipped during calamities. The image from Nabhaṅgā is in her terrible appearance with emaciated body, and she wears human skulls round her matted hair, waist and neck. She is seated on a corpse; on her right side is a vulture and on the left a jackal and further below are heaps of bones. The deity has six hands. The sculpture may be ascribed to the 11th-12th century A. D.[198]

(iv) A similar image of *Cāmuṇḍā* with four hands is found in the Kāmākhyā Hill, with a terrible look, protruding teeth, long tongue, emaciated body, erect hair, withered belly and sunken eyes. The pedestal is covered with ghosts. The deity holds a trident in one hand and cap of skulls in the other.[199]

(v) The image of *Durgā* from Deopānī shows her as *Caṇḍi*. The *Viṣṇudharmottara* describes *Mahiṣāmardinī* under the name of *Caṇḍikā* with twenty hands, holding different weapons. But the present sculpture from Deopānī has only four hands, holding a *triśūla* in her upper right and a mirror in the upper left; the lower ones are in *varadā*. On either side of the deity stands a female with joined hands, and above them are the images of *Gaṇeśa* and *Kārtikeya* riding on a peacock.[200]

196. K.L. Barua, *J.A.R.S.*, II, p. 12.
197. R. M. Nath, *Ibid.*, VIII, pp. 85f.
198. Nath, *Ibid.*, pp. 35-37.
199. *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1923-24, pp. 80-81.
200. Nath, *J.A.R.S.*, VIII, pp. 130-34; Bloch, *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1905; Dikṣhit, *Ibid*, 1923-24. pp. 80-82.

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(vi) Figures of *Pārvatī* occur on many temple walls. A fine specimen is found at Gauhāti with a sword in her right hand and a mirror in the left.[201] Near Dibrugarh some figures of the deity were noticed from the temple ruins.[202]

(vii) Images of *Durgā* are found from other places. Of the rock-cut images from *Pāṇḍu*, one is that of *Durgā*.[203] One basalt image of the deity from the remains at Bāmuṇī Hills is a fine specimen of Assam's carvings.[204]

(viii) Two figures of the deity were noticed, one in her terrible aspect from the Sesā river remains, and another in south Kāmarūpa, about 30 miles to the south-west of Gauhāti.[205] Similar sculptures were noticed from the Śiṅgri temple,[206] ruins at Chārduār,[207] and at Tezpur where she is seated in her conventional style.[208]

Images of Mahā-Laksmi and Lakṣmī: These icons are found either independently or as consorts of *Viṣṇu*. They also appear on some of the sculptured specimens. According to the texts, the *Devī*, conceived as a girl of thirteen, is known as *Mahā-Lakṣmī;*[209] of her eight forms, that of only *Gaja-Lakṣmī* has so far been noticed in Assam.

(i) In a niche of the stone slab from Tezpur a beautiful carving containing "the well-known group of *Kamalātmikā* or *Gaja-Lakṣmī*" was found, "in which the two elephants pour water over the head of a goddess from vases held in their trunks."[210]

(ii) On a stone panel near Maṭhorbari was noticed a figure of *Mahā-Lakṣmī* in the centre with two elephants on either side, pouring water from the pitchers held in their trunks.[211] In the Gauhāti Museum there is another specimen of the deity.

201. *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1920-21.
202. Dalton, *J.A.S.B.*, XXIV, p. 22.
203. *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1923-24, pp. 80-81.
204. S. Kataki, *I.H.Q.*, VI, pp. 367-72.
205. *J.A.S.B.*, XXIV, pp. 5f, 21f.
206. S. Kataki, *J.A.R.S.*, IV, pp. 93f.
207. *J.A.S.B.*, IV, pp. 186f.
208. *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1924-25, pp. 94f.
209. Rao, I, II, pp. 332f; Sukla, *Vāstu Śāstra*, II, pp. 310f.
210. *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1924-25, pp. 94f; see also Sukla, *Vāstu Śāstra*, for details, pp. 312f.
211. *J.A.R.S.*, VI, pp. 34-37.

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(iii) We have stated that *Lakṣmī* occurs in most icons and sculptures as a consort of *Viṣṇu*. The texts state that she should be represented as seated upon *padmāsana*, holding lotus in her hands and with a lotus garland; on either side should be an elephant pouring water on her head from pitchers, presented by her attendants. She should wear all ornaments and carry in her right hand a lotus and a *vilba* fruit in her left. According to some texts, she should have four hands, if worshipped separately.[212] The description almost tallies with the representation of the deity in Assam. A panel from Maṭhorbāri shows a seated figure of *Lakṣmī*.[213]

(iv) Another figure of the deity, attended by two females was discovered from the Chārduār ruins.[214]

Sarasvatī: She appears as a consort of both *Brahmā* and *Viṣṇu;* in Assam she is found sculptured along with the latter deity and on rare occasions independently. The texts state that she should have four hands and be seated on a *padmāsana;* in one of her right hands she should hold an *akṣamālā* and the other right should be in *vyākhyāna mudrā;* in her left hand she should hold a book and a white *padma*. She should wear a *jaṭāmukuṭa*, sacred thread and a number of ornaments. According to other texts, she should stand on a *padma*, holding *kamaṇḍalu* and *vīṇā* in *samabhaṅga* pose; still others make her carry *aṅkuśa*, *vīṇā*, *akśamālā* and *pustaka*.[215]

The specimens from Assam include the following: (i) A crude figure of the deity was noticed from the ruins of the Copper temple at Sadiyā,[216] like that of Chārduār.[217]

(ii) Another figure in her *tribhaṅga* pose was discovered from Śivasāgar, wearing a *ratnakuṇḍala*, *hāra*, anklets and girdles. This is one of the most beautifully executed sculptures of Assam.

(iii) On a niche of the stone slab from Tezpur, an image of the deity with a *vīṇā* in her hands was found.[218]

212. Rao, I, II, pp. 372f.
213. *J.A.R.S.*, VI, pp. 34-37.
214. Westmacott, *J.A.S.B.*, IV, pp. 186f.
215. Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, I, II, pp. 377f.
216. T. Bloch, *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1905, p. 2.
217. *J.A.S.B.*, IV, pp. 186f.
218. *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1924-25, pp. 94f.

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(iv) Three sets of the images of the deity along with those of *Viṣṇu* and *Lakṣmī* were discovered on a stone lintel from Buḍhāgosāithān.[219]

Jagaddhātrī (earth goddess): In the texts *Bhūmi* appears as a consort of *Viṣṇu*.[219a] She should be represented as wearing a *karaṇḍamukuṭa* and various garments and ornaments. According to one text, she should have two hands, each carying a *padma* or *nīlotpala* flower and be shown either standing or seated on a lotus; while another represents her as wearing a sacred thread, with four hands, carrying a *ratnapātra*, *śasypātra*, *auṣadhipātra* and a *padma*, seated upon an elephant.[220] Only one sculpture of the deity was found from Vasundharīthān (Nowgong).[220a] The image is mutilated and has four hands, one of which is probably in *varadā* and another holding a *padma*. The deity is standing upon a figure which appears to be an animal, standing upon another.[221]

Manasā: The snake goddess, *Manasā* is iconographically represented as a beautiful female, with golden colour, a canopy of serpent-hood over her head and a number of snakes coiled round her body along with her *vāhana*, a snake.[222] A few specimens of the deity have so far been found.

(i) The bronze image of *Manasā* has on her lap a child. The pair is taken by some as representing *Yaśodā* and *Kṛṣṇa*.[223] The sculpture is ascribed to the 12th-13th century A. D. The deity has two hands, seated on a *lalitāsana*. The right hand is holding a fruit in *varadā* and in the left she is holding her child. There is a serpent hood over her head and a snake is coiling round her right arm. A small indistinct figure is seen below on the back of the deity. On the basis of the texts, the sculpture may be taken as that of *Manasā* with her child *Āstika*.[224]

(ii) Another interesting specimen is found at Śilghāṭ in Nowgong, where the deity is sculptured on an elephant (*Nāgendra*). A number of snakes are seen covering her body and forming a canopy over her head.

219. *J.A.R.S.*, V, pp. 14f.
219a. See Sukla, *Vāstu Śāstra* II, p. 313, for details.
220. Rao, I, II, pp. 377f.
220a. Another bronze image was found along with a horde of icons at Narakāsur Hills.
221. *J.A.R.S.*, V, pp. 14f; *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1920-21, p. 39.
222. Bhattasali, *Iconography of the Buddhist and Hindu Sculptures*, pp. 212-227.
223. *Pros. and Trans. of the Seventh Oriental Conf.*, 1933, 775f.
224. *J.A.R.S.*, VIII, pp. 13-16.

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(iii) The images of the deity, one of bronze and another of stone with serpent hood were found along with a horde of finds at Narakāsur Hills.

Gaṅgā and Yamunā: These two deities are associated with the *makaras*.[225] In the opinion of Smith, "they were tree spirits like the *Yakṣīs* at Bharhut and only became river deities later."[226] They constitute one of the motifs of the Gupta art, as in ancient Assam. The following specimens are important.

(i) The finest representation of both is found on the door jamb from Dah Parvatiā. "In the lower part of each of the jambs is the figure of a female deity whose divine nature is indicated by the halo behind her head. Each of the goddesses stands with a garland in her hands in an elegant posture and these two figures appear to represent *Gaṅgā* and *Yamunā*, so common in door jambs of ancient Gupta and medieval temples."[227]

(ii) An independent image of *Gaṅgā* occurs on a black piece of stone from Nabhaṅgā (Kenduguri).[228]

(g) *Icons of other minor deities: Gaṇeśa:* Though mainly found associated with the icons of *Durgā*, *Gaṇeśa* appears as an independent deity in a number of temples and as images from various parts of Assam in his different poses.[229] A son of *Śiva*, he is worshiped by people of all sects. He may be depicted on the doorway of every temple and seated either on a *padmāsana*, a mouse or a lion or standing, with two or three eyes and four, six, eight, ten or sixteen hands, wearing a snake as sacred-thread. He has varieties like *Bāla Gaṇapati*, *Taruṇa*, *Bhakta*, *Vīra*, *Śakti*, etc., with different representations.[230] The following specimens are important.

(i) An early image of the deity, ascribed to the 8th-9th century A. D. was discovered from Pāṇḍu. The image is of sandstone and of a *sthānaka* variety, with four hands and wearing a *Jaṭāmukuṭa;* the right back hand is holding a *paraśu* and the left back a *padma*.[231] Of the five rock-cut images from the same place, four represent *Gaṇeśa*.

225. Codrington, *Ancient India*, p. 59 (f.n. 5).
226. *Fine Art in India and Ceylon*, p. 79.
227. *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1924-25, pp. 94f.
228. R.M. Nath, *J.A.R.S.*, VIII, pp. 35-37.
229. C.f. S.K. Sarasvati, *C.R.*, LXVII, pp. 77-80; Getty, *Gaṇeśa*, pp. 5-7.
230. Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, II, I, pp. 35f.
231. *J.A.R.S.*, X, pp. 35-37.

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(ii) In Vasundharī were noticed two rock-cut images of the deity, seated on a mouse; one image is holding in his right hand a necklace of beads and the end of the trunk is resting on the palm of the left hand. The other is wearing a *vanamālā* and both are wearing sacred threads of snakes.[232]

(iii) An image of the deity was found carved on a boulder in Nowgong to the east of Bhoiparvat in the main range of the Mikir Hills. He is seated on a mouse, holding in his four hands a fan, *padma*, *gadā* and sweets.[233]

(iv) The rock-cut image of the deity from Tezpur is 3 ft. in height to the top of the trefoil arch, holding sweets, flowers or sprouts and *pāśa* in three hands, the fourth one being in *varadā*. The other remains in the area point to the 9th-10th century A. D. as the probable date of the sculpture.[234]

(v) The figure of the deity depicted in a niche from the ruins at Vasundharī is interesting. On the top there is a *kīrtimukha* with a necklace of pearls coming out of its mouth. The deity is wearing a *jaṭā* and lotus buds in the ears, and holds in his hands a blue lotus, *paraśu*, rosary and eatables, swallowing the last with his trunk. The mouse is depicted below.[235]

(vi) Many rock-cut images are noticed on the bank of the river Brahmaputra. Dikṣhit ascribes the rock-cut figure at the landing ghat near Tezpur to the 9th-10th century A. D.[236]

(vii) Another figure of a squatting *Gaṇeśa* appears on a stone from Numaligarh.[237]

(viii) Other specimens from various places are from the door jamb of Dah Parvatīā, [238] a seated figure from the remains of the Sesā river, carved in high relief;[239] rock-cut images from Umānanda and Urvaśī;[240] a seated *Gaṇeśa* from Chārduār;[241] a miniature type of the deity from the

232. *Ibid.*, V, pp. 14f.
233. *Ibid.*, VIII, pp. 85f.
234. K.N. Dikṣhit, *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1928-29, pp. 45-46.
235. *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1920-21, pp. 39f.
236. *Ibid.*, 1929-30, p. 14.
237. *Ibid.*, 1936-37, pp. 54f.
238. *Ibid.*, 1924-25, pp. 94f.
239. *J.A.S.B.*, XXIV, pp. 21f.
240. *J.A.R.S.*, II, pp. 104-5; *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1924-25, p. 101,.
241. *J.A.S.B.*, IV, pp. 186f.

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niche of a door lintel from Tezpur;[242] from a panel in Maṭhorbari; on a window lintel from Mahāmāyāthān; a seated figure from a door lintel in Tetelipukhurī; similar figures are found on stone friezes from Kāwaimārī, Yogījān and Gāchtal.[243]

(ix) A dancing rock-cut image of the deity with four hands occurs in the Kāmākhyā Hills; he is seated on a rat.[244]

(x) Some panels from Ākāśīgaṅgā show the images of dwarfed *Gaṇeśa*, seated and dancing.[245]

(xi) A huge rock-cut image of the deity occurs with, *Viṣṇu*, *Sūryya* *Śiva* and *Durgā* at Śukleśvara on the bank of the Brahmaputra.

Kārtikeya: Another son of *Śiva*, known also as *Skanda*, his birth story is given in the *Bālakhaṇḍa* of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Vana parvan* of the *Mahābhārata*. He is sculptured as seated or standing, with or without *Śakti*. When seated on a *padma* or a peacock, he should have two hands; if standing, four; and if seated on a peacock, he may have six, eight or twelve hands, holding his usual weapons.[246] In Assam he is usually sculptured with *Durgā* and sometimes independently; but the specimens are very few.

(i) In Sadiyā was found an image of the deity, riding on his *mayūra* and holding in his hands a staff and a bow.

(ii) In an image of *Caṇḍī* from Deopānī, the deity occurs riding on his *vāhana* with *Gaṇeśa*.[247]

Indra: In Hindu mythology, the deity is a guardian of the eastern quarter.[248] Iconographically he is to be depicted with two eyes, two hands, wearing a *mukuṭa*, *hāra*, *kuṇḍalas*, *keyūra* and other ornaments. He should carry in his right hand a *śakti* and in the left an *aṅkuśa;* he may be represented standing or seated on a *siṁhāsana* or seated upon an elephant. He should have *Indrāṇī* as his consort and accompanied by two female *gandharvas*. Some texts prescribe for him a third eye and three hands carrying a *vajra*, *nīlotpala* and *padma*.[249] The following icons of the deity are important:

242. *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1924-25, pp. 94f.
243. *J.A.R.S.*, V, pp. 14f; VI, 34f; VIII, 85f.
244. *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1930-34, p. 129.
245. *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1936-37, pp. 54f. Another bronze image of *Gaṇeśa* was found at Narakāsur Hills.
246. See Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, II, II, p. 415.
247. *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1923-24, pp. 80-81.
248. See Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, II, II, pp. 517f.
249. *Ibid.*

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(i) The image of the deity from near the *Chatrākara* temple (Gauhāti) is one of the finest representations. He is standing on a pedestal with the figure of an elephant below and on either side of the animal there are carved lotus buds in three rows. He is wearing *hāras, kaṅkaṇas, keyūras*, sacred thread, etc. A canopy of five hoods of a snake is shown over his head; above the canopy is a *kīrtimukha* and below it are two flying *vidyādharas*, one on each side. On either side of the deity there are attendants—a female on the right and a male on the left. The male is holding a *kamaṇḍalu* and *kuśa* and wearing a *jaṭā*. The only difference from the text is that his hands are showing *varadā* and *abhaya*. The sculpture is a good example of early Assamese art, and is peculiar in the sense that *Indra* is not associated with a canopy of serpent hoods. The elephant, his *vāhana*, makes it possible to identify the deity with *Indra* and "it is possible that an attempt has been made to identify *Indra* with *Balarāma*, the elder brother of *Kṛṣṇa*, who is always represented with such snake hoods. In fact, the appellation *Upendra* given to *Viṣṇu* indicates *Indra* as an elder brother of *Viṣṇu* and is this identifiable with *Balarāma*, the elder brother of *Kṛṣṇa*".[250]

(ii) The rock-cut image of the deity from *Pāṇḍu* has two hands showing *samabhaṅga;* there are two female attendants, one on each side, and his *vāhana*, the elephant, is carved below. The right hand is holding a *vajra* and the left, a *padma*.[251]

(iii) Of singular archaeological interest is the bronze image of *Indra*, found along with a number of icons at Narakāsur Hills. The deity is seated majestically on an elephant, with two hands, one in *varadā*, and the other in *abhaya*, flanked on either side by two female attendants, with one kneeling figure at the base in front. The icon may be ascribed to about 8th. century A. D. The horde of finds indicate that the deities were worshipped, centering round *Indra*, in a temple or temples.

Agni: He is the guardian of the south-east. The texts represent him with two heads, seven hands, three legs and four horns. He is sometimes identified with *Rudra* or *Śiva*, having four hands and three eyes, wearing a *jaṭā* and seated upon a ram. The front two hands should be in *varadā* and *abhaya*, while the back right should hold a *śruk* and the back left, a *śakti;* if sculptured with two hands, one should carry *śruk* and the other *śakti*. According to other texts, he should wear a sacred thread

250. See S. Kataki, *J.A.R.S.*, IX, pp. 88-92.
251. *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1923-24, pp. 80-81.

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and should carry *akṣamālā* and *kamaṇḍalu*, and, if with four hands, he should carry flames of fire and *triśūla* in his right hands and *akṣamālā* in one of his left, the other left embracing his consort *Svāhā*. In this aspect he should have four tusks, and his chariot should be drawn by four parrots, the driver being *Vāyu*. There are other details in other texts.[252]

Only one image of the deity is preserved in the Museum at Gauhāti. He is standing with a long beard, holding a *kamaṇḍalu* and *tridaṇḍa* in his two hands, wearing a sacred thread and a small garment, *kaupīna*. The sculpture does not correspond to the details in the texts. Another icon of the deity in bronze was found along with a horde of finds at Narakāsur Hills.

Kuvera: He is the lord of the north. Iconographically he should be represented as wearing a *karaṇḍa-mukuṭa*, *hāra* and *kuṇḍalas*, having two or four hands; if two, the hands should be in *varadā* and *abhaya*, or the left one may hold a *gadā;* if four, he should embrace his two consorts by two of his hands and the other two should carry a *gadā* and *śakti*. He may be seated on *padmāsana*, or driving a chariot, or seated on the shoulder of a man, having as his *vāhana* either an elephant or a ram.[253] An image of the deity in the Gauhāti Museum depicts him as having a pot belly and carrying a vessel in his hand.

Vidyādharas, Kinnaras and Dvārapālas: In almost every work of sculpture, *Vidyādharas* and *Kinnaras* appear as attendants of other main deities. The *Mānasāra* describes the *Gandharvas* and the *Vidyādharas* in their flying position, depicted standing, playing on instruments or dancing. Both the *Gandharvas* and the *Kinnaras* find mention as early as the *Vedas*. According to the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* they are to be depicted as attendants of *Brahmā.*, *Viṣṇu*, *Śiva* and *Indra*, hovering in the sky with their wings. They are shown also in the Buddhist and Jain shrines.[254]

Vidyādharas are found depicted on various sculptures from different places. There is the carving of a hovering *Vidyādhara* on a stone image of *Viṣṇu* (Gosāijuri) with a scarf held in hands in the ethereal region, indicated by a circle with indented edges as in the Pāla representations.[255]

252. See Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, II, II, pp. 517f.
253. *Ibid.*
254. See R.S. Pañcamukhi, '*Gandharvas and Kinnaras in Indian Iconography*', *Pros. and Trans. of the 10th Oriental Conf.*, 1940, pp. 553f; J.N. Banerjea, '*Vidyādhara*', *J.I.S.O.A.*, IV, pp. 52-56; W. J. Wilkin, *Hindu Mythology*, Chaps. X-XI.
255. *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1936-37, pp. 54f.

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On the top of the image of *Vasūdeva* from Tarāvasā, there are two flying *Vidyādharas* with flutes in the hands of each and just below them are two *Gandharvas*, the right one with wings and playing on a flute and the left one dancing.[256] Two flying *Vidyādharas* are depicted on the top of the image of *Brahmā* and *Indra* from Gauhāti.[257] A stone slab from Deopānī shows the figure of *Vidyādhara*, holding a scarf or a necklace in both hands and hovering in the sky.[258] Flying *Vidyādharas* are also noticed from the ruins at Baḍgaṅgā, Mikirāti and Maṭḥorbari[259] and several figures of *Gandharvas* and *Kinnaras* appear as ornamentations on the door jambs of Dah-Parvatīa,[260] Śiṅgri temple,[261] Kāmākhyā,[262] Chārduār[263] and other places. A *Kinnarī* from Gauhāti is seen with a bow in her hand, and, though the figure is mutilated, the sculpture shows elegant execution.

The *dvārapālas* are found depicted on temple walls from various ruins. Some figures are seen in a *Viṣṇu* temple at North Gauhāti. A figure of a *dvārapālikā* occurs in a *Viṣṇu* temple from Śivasāgar. Another figure of the *dvārapālikā*, now in the Gauhāti Museum, is depicted in her *tribhaṅga*, wearing circular *kuṇḍalas*, necklaces, a girdle and a garment with folds. Some door jambs from Deopānī show female door keepers with coronets on their heads and huge perforated *patrakuṇḍalas*. The *dvārapālas* from the ruins of Ākāśīgaṅgā show them holding *śūla* and *pāśa;* others are seen holding a *kamaṇḍalu*, and are shown either with two or four hands.[264] The ruins at Mahādeocal and Buḍḥāgosāithān show them with bows and arrows.[265] More or less similar figures are found from the ruins of Cāṅgchauki, Āmtal, Moudaṅgā, Maṭḥorbari and other places.[266]

6. Painting :

The art of painting in India goes back to remote antiquity.[267] Both the Brāhmaṇical and Buddhist literature refer to painting and painted

256. *Ibid.*
257. *J.A.R.S.*, IX, pp. 88-92.
258. *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1936-37, pp. 54f.
259. *J.A.R.S.*, V, pp. 14f; VI, 34f.
260. *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1923-24, pp. 119-20.
261. *J.A.R.S.*, IV, pp. 93-95.
262. *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1923-24, pp. 80-81.
263. *J.A.S.B.*, IV, pp. 186f.
264. *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1936-37, pp. 54f.
265. *J.A.R.S*, V, pp. 14f.
266. *Ibid.*, VI, pp. 34f.
267. Rao, *M.R.*, 1918; pp. 557-67; P. Brown, *Indian Painting*, Intro., pp. 7, 15f; Smith, *Fine Art in India and Ceylon*, pp. 92f; Rhys Davids, *Buddhist India*, p. 96; Goldstücker, *Pāṇini*, pp. 228f; Havell, *Handbook of Indian Art*, pp. 86f; *Indian Sculpture and Painting*, pp. 155f.

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halls.[268] The details are given in Vātsāyana's *Kāmasūtra*, which mentions six principles: *rūpabheda*, *pramāṇaṁ*, *bhāva*, *lāvaṇyayojanaṁ*, *sādṛśyaṁ* and *varṇikabhaṅga*. The same reference is made by Yaśodhara's commentary on the *Kāmasūtra* and the *Śilparatna* (64) of Śrī Kumāra. Other authoritative treatises are: *Viṣṇudharmottaraṁ* III, *Samarāṅgaṇa-sūtradhāra*, *Aparājita-Pracchā*, and *Mānasollāsa*.[269]

When the art of painting was practised in Assam is hard to guess. The epigraphs make only vague references to pictures. The Nowgong grant (v. 14) mentions that the palaces in the city and rooms were ornamented with realistic pictures. An incidental reference to pictures is found in the Tezpur grant of Vanamāla (v·24). An earlier reference is made by the Nidhanpur grant of the 7th century A. D., which refers to portraits hung on the walls of the royal palace of Bhāskaravarman. A specimen of drawing and an idea of painting is also found in the Guākuchi plates of the king Indrapāla.[269a]

The archaeological ruins, however, do not give us any definite information on the subject. This is probably because of the fact that not a single structure is found in its original condition. Literature no doubt makes a number of references to paintings on both paper and cloth. The earliest mention is made by Bāṇa, who refers to painted cloth with patterns of jasmine flowers (*jātīpaṭṭikāḥ*); "drinking vessels, embossed by skilful artists"; "carved boxes of panels for painting with brushes and gourds", and "gold painted bamboo cages."[270] The nature of the painting is uncertain. Portrait painting is found in the border painting of some old Assamese manuscripts before and after the 14th century A.D. Harivara Vipra (14th century A.D.), for instance, in his "*Babruvāhana-Parva*" refers to painting on walls. For painting the illustrations of the Assamese manuscript, *Hastividyārṇava*, two expert painters were employed. Similar specimens are found in some manuscripts of the pre-Āhom and Āhom period, particularly in *Gītagovinda*, *Lava-Kuśara yuddha*, *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, and in the *Darraṅgrāja vaṁśāvalī*,[271] *Dharma Purāṇa*, *Śailaparvan* of the *Mahābhārata* and *Śaṅkhacūḍavadha-kāvya*. The art received perfection during the Āhom rule; some manuscripts and chronicles depict scenes from the Āhom court life. Śaṅkaradeva

268. *Mahāvaṁśa*, LXX, 83; Bhavabhūti, *Uttararāmacarita*, III, 2, 27, 34-43; Kramrisch, (ed.), *Viṣṇudharmottaraṁ*.

269. See D.N. Sukla, *Vāstu Śāstra*, II, p. 365f.

269a. *K.S.*, pp. 130-45.

270. (Cowell), 212f.

271. *Des. Cat. of Assamese Manuscripts*, *Intro.*, XVII-XVIII.

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himself painted scenes mainly of heavenly figures, on papers and cloths for dramatic performances (*Cihṇa Yātrā*). In fact, the art of painting reached a stage of perfection during the Vaiṣṇava reformation. But, the absence of any good evidence of painting from the earlier period prevents us from assessing the achievement of the ancient Assamese painters as we may do in the case of architecture, sculpture and icons. It is, however, likely that the painters did not fall short of the artists in other allied subjects. The perfection that was attained in this branch of fine art during the Āhom period, is itself an indication of the existence of a long established tradition and its early practice and culture.

7. Conclusion :

The above description of the fine arts of Assam gives one a good impression that the masons, sculptors and painters of the period under our review had a reputation to their credit. The remains as a whole are by no means small. Close parallels have been noticed between Assamese art and those from Pāṭaliputra and Banaras schools of the Gupta Age, and those of Bihar, Orissa, Central and Southern India (Chālukyan), Cylon and even of distant places like Java.[272] This can be substantiated by a brief reference to certain important specimens from Assam.

We have already noticed that the figures of *Gaṅgā* and *Yamunā* on the door jambs, with other decorative designs from Dah Parvatiā, ascribed to the fifth-sixth century A.D., are the best of all known sculptures from ancient Assam; door frames of similar designs have also been discovered from North Bengal.[273] But the carvings are characteristic of the style of the early Gupta schools of sculptures. The lintel appears to be larger in size than the door frame as in the Gupta temples at Bhumara, Nachnakuthara and Deogarh. The *chaitya* window patterns on the jambs show close resemblance to those of the Gupta temples of the same places. As Banerji points out "the sculptors' sense of proportion, the beautiful symmetry of the figures and ornamental devices and the excellence of execution tend to prove that this door lintel belongs to the same period as the great schools of sculpture which existed at Pāṭaliputra and Banaras in the fifth and sixth centuries."[274] The beautifully decorated door jambs from the Bāmuṇī Hills, ascribed to the 9th-10th century A.D., also are of a type not found elsewhere in Assam.[275]

272. *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1936-37, pp. 54f.
273. K.N. Dikṣhit, *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1923-24, pp. 119-120; *Ibid.*, 1929-30, pp. 45-46.
274. *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1924-25, pp. 94f.
275. Dikṣhit, *Ibid.*, 1928-29, p. 44.

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One stone fragment from the Kāmākhyā temple is a beautifully carved frieze in which the upper band represents a series of garlands and the lower, scroll work, in which some beautifully executed representation of animals, such as a buffalo, a deer, a lion and a tiger are noticed; the quality of the sculpture is unsurpassed in Assam.[276] Some rock-cut images and friezes from the western gateway of the temple reveal exceptional sculptural skill. The carving of the *Veṇu Gopāla*, for example, recalls the decorative details of Gupta and Pallava art.[277] Flowers, creepers, animals, birds and serpent designs occurring on one of the door jambs from Gāchtal in Nowgang, are beautifully executed in a style recalling the Pāla school of Art. Other important motifs are vases flanked by lions and foliage flanked by elephants, which strongly suggest later Gupta influence. Elegantly sculptured blocks of stone from the ruins at Deopānī also recall late Gupta art. One ceiling slab from Deopānī contains the figures of a *Vidyādhara* within the seed vessel of a *padma*, showing close resemblance to Gupta and Pāla sculptures. While the facial expression of the figure is local, the decorative and anatomical details of the sculpture recall late Gupta and Pāla style.[278]

The outlines of the plinth mouldings from the ruins at Tezpur show that the medieval architects of Assam employed the same motifs and figures as those in other parts of Northern India; the ornamentation of the plinth mouldings bears marked similarity to the same designs from Orissa.[279] Temples of the *sikhara* type from the Kāmākhyā Hills show designs, found in some temples in Orissa.[280]

One beautifully carved stone slab from Tezpur, with the pattern of *chaitya* windows, bears similarity in design to those from Central India, especially from the Rewa state and Khājuraho.[281] The lower part of the sanctum of the shrine at Kāmākhyā, which is still in good preservation, consists of sunken panels alternately with pilasters, and below them, the plinth mouldings of an older temple of the same design as that discovered in Tezpur. The designs are like those of the dados of Khājuraho or the Central Indian type.[282]

One of the shafts of pillars from Tezpur shows marked similarity with the Chālukyan columns. The shaft is decorated beautifully with

276. *Ibid.*, 1923-24, pp. 80-81.
277. Rāmachandran, *Ibid.*, 1936-37, pp. 54f.
278. *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1936-37. pp. 54f.
279. *Ibid.*, 1924-25, pp. 90f.
280. *Ibid.*, 1923-24, pp. 80-81.
281. *Ibid.*, 1924-25, pp. 90f.
282. *Ibid.*, pp.100f.

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a band at the upper end and over it the shaft is round and appears to be lathe-turned like the upper parts of the Western Chālukyan columns.[283] Beautifully sculptured stone blocks from Ākāśīgaṅgā show designs resembling the Chālukyan style.[284] Stone pieces from Gosāijuri showing *yavaṇikā* and other designs, recall in shape and sculptures the art of South India, and even of Ceylon.[285]

These are some of the best specimens of carvings and fine arts from Assam, showing similarities with those from contemporary India. But, the interpretation of the fine arts of Assam, as of other parts of India, is rather a difficult task. This is specially so when we are to pass our opinion on a heap of scattered ruins. The meaning of any work of art lies not in our taste but in its true understanding.[286] For a critical estimate, the interpreter should not only "be fully alive to the situation into which he is placed in space and time—but that while seeing, he should contemplate—Having participated in the urge, in the compulsion that has brought forth—art and stepping aside into the mental sphere of one's knowledge and awareness, it will be possible to study Indian art as that living form of the Indian mind, which utters what words cannot communicate in a consistent language of its own".[287] Though the heaps of ruins of our period do not help us much in rightly assessing the aesthetic achievement of the Assamese artists, it is evident that the fine arts of Assam tended to be closer to the art of the Guptas and those of the schools of Bihar and Orissa rather than to the contemporary Pāla school of Bengal.[288] This was mainly because Assam's cultural relations have been intimate with Bihar and Orissa.

Though the fine arts of Assam were fundamentally based on the Indian traditional system, generally following the lines laid down in the *śilpaśāstra*, on most occasions we find that Assamese art exhibits marked peculiarities.[289] This, however, does not mean that something like a Kāmarūpa school of art and architecture was developed in our period.[289a] The peculiarities and differences between the Assamese art

283. *Ibid.*, 1924-25, pp. 90f.
284. *Ibid.*, 1936-37, pp. 54f.
285. *Ibid.*
286. See A.K. Coomeraswamy, *C.R.*, XLVIII, pp. 143-46.
287. Kramrisch, *C.R.*, 1933, pp. 61-65.
288. Dikṣhit, *A.R.A.S.I.*, 1927-28, pp. 112-113.
289. S. Kataki, *J.A.R.S.*, VIII, pp. 38-43.
289a. Many factors contributed to the evolutions of as many as four or more schools of sculptures in India, of which the fourth one is said to have been chiefly represented by the sculptures of Bengal, Orissa and Assam: see Sukla, *Vāstu Śāstra*, II, p. 72. This conclusion is, however, partly true.

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and those of other parts of India were mainly due to the non-Aryan influence in Assam, which was more effective than other parts of India. This influence is seen not only in the ruins from places like Ḍimāpur and Sadiyā, the centres of Tibeto-Burman culture, but also in Nowgong and Deopānī to which we have made some references in the description of the ruins. An outstanding example of this influence of the non-Aryans on the Brāhmaṇical or the Aryan art is the Deopānī *Viṣṇu* image of the 9th century A.D.[290] This is definitely proved by the Mongolian expression of the face and the treatment of the lower lip and is confirmed by the fact that the find-spot of the icon lies close to Ḍimāpur and Kasomārī, the centres of the Tibeto-Burman culture. In fact, this non-Aryan influence was felt in every part of India to a greater or smaller degree, and each school of art developed some local characteristics, as in Assam. Kramrisch rightly remarks that like plasticity and naturalism, dynamic characteristics, influenced by various racial factors, determined the art history of India as a whole.[291] Similar changes took place in Bengal, South India and other places, as in Assam, where the foundation of culture was mainly laid by the Austric, Alpine and Tibeto-Burman elements.

The peculiarities and changes, therefore, in Assam were not only due to the influence of the Tāntrik system. These were developed long before the introduction of that system. We can, therefore, hardly support the conclusion arrived at by B.K. Barua that from the 12th century A.D. "for the first time we find the rebirth of the provincial or national art language arising out of the traditional Indian and indigenous local conceptions".[292] Because, as we have stated, the changes in the art history of Assam were not merely introduced by the Tāntrik influence, and moreover, the origin of the system, as we have shown elsewhere, goes back to the phallic fertility cult of the Austric and other non-Aryan elements. There were peculiarities in the domain of fine arts as in other aspects of Assam's culture before the 12th century A.D., and these forces remained operating also after the close of that century. At no period in the art history of Assam, in fact, was a purely national art evolved.[292a] We are to judge Assam's art therefore, from the standpoint of the achievement of the Indian artists, with whom, at all periods those of Assam had affinity, and whose imaginative contemplation produced works of art, which were at once realistic and idealised, spiritual and mystic, symbolic

290. Dikṣhit, *E.I.*, XVIII, pp. 329-30.
291. *Ancient Indian Sculpture*, pp. 127f.
292. *Cultural History of Assam*, I, p. 196.
292a. With certain peculiarities, Assamese painting as well shows its intimate relationship with the Indian traditional system.

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and transcendental,[293] and which raised rhythmic waves in a sculptured scene or an image, reminiscent of the rhythms of music.

All that we have said, has a bearing on the surface finds, which constitute but a fragment of the treasures, that have been lying underground for centuries. We shall be on firmer grounds in evaluating the art traditions of Assam, if more specimens of sculptures and icons are dug out from the depth of earth by undertaking planned excavation work under the auspices of the State Department of Archaeology. The Universities of Assam may also be expected to do their bounden duties in providing for studies at least in Fine arts and Archaeology in so far as this State is concerned.

The review of Assam's monuments with which we close this work, would, it is believed, promote further research into this ever important subject, which would throw more light on a few dark chapters on other allied cultural aspects and as yet uninvestigated fields of historical studies of this State. Nevertheless, the picture of the past and forgotten people of the land that we have been able to draw here, will no doubt give one an impression of their remarkable achievement in the scheme of cultural evolution, which has become our own, vitalising and enriching Indian life and conditions as a whole.

293. Havell, *Indian Sculpture and Painting*, pp. 10f, 29f, 41.

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APPENDICES

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APPENDIX I

TABLE 1

Specimens of Dialects showing Khāsi-Mon-Khmer affinity

English	Khāsi	Mon	Muṇḍārī	Santālī	Ho
One	Wei, She	Mway	Miāt, Mit	Mit	Miād
Eye	Ka-Khmāt	Mot	Me'd	Me, Mat	Met
I	Ngā	Awai	Ing, Aing	Ing	Ing, Aing
Man	Ubriw	Karu	Hārā	Hār, Hārāl	Ho, Horo
Sun	Ka-sngi	Tangway	Singi	Sin chāndo	Singi

TABLE 2

Specimens of Dialects of the North-Assam Branch

English	Akā	Dafalā	Miri	Ābar	Mishmi
One	A	Ākin	Āka	Āko	Ekhing
Eye	Ni	Nyūk	Āmik	Āming	Ma-lom
I	Ngna, Nya, Na	Ngo	Nga	Ngo	Hā
Man	Nunā	Bāṅgi	Āmi	Āmei	Name, Male, Mowā
Sun	Jū	Dani	Danyī	Āreng	Ring, Ring-nging

TABLE 3

Specimens of Dialects of Nagā Group

English	Āngāmi	Semā	Rengmā	Lhota	Chāṅg
One	Po	Lāki	Me, Kāmme	Ekhā	Chi
Eye	Mha, Mhi, Mhu	Āngnīti	Ayehte, Nghe	Omhyek	Nyuk
I	Ā	Ngi	Āle, Ale	Ā, Ai, Ākhā	Ungi , Ngo
Man	Mā, Themmā	Timi, Mi	Tame	Kyo	Miyet
Sun	Tināki, Nāki	Ātsinkihe	Iyeka, Hekā	Eng	Chāna

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TABLE 4

Specimens of Dialects of the Nagā-Boḍo-Kuki Sub-Groups

English	Mikir	Kacha	Khoirāo	Taṅgkul	Maring
One	Ishih, Īsī	Kāt	Khat	Khatka	Khat
Eye	Āmek	Mimik	Mik	Mik	Mit
I	Ne	Ānūi	Hai	I	Kai
Man	Ārleṅg	Minā	Mi, Chapāmi	Mayārno	Napāwa, Thami
Sun	Ārnī	Tingnai	Tamik	Chimik	Mūmit

TABLE 5

Specimens of Dialects of the Kuki-Lushāi-Meithei-Chin Groups

English	Meithei	Thādo	Lushāi	Hraṅgkul	Kachin
One	Amā	Khat	Pakhat	Enkāt	Ngaimā Ai, Aimā
Eye	Mit	Kāmit	Mit	Āmit	Mī
I	Ai	Keima	Keimā	Gemā	Ngai
Man	Mi, Nipā	Mi, Pasal	Mīpā	Mīrim	Wa, Lāshā
Sun	Numit	Ni, Nisā	Nī	Mīsā, Nīsā	Jān

TABLE 6

Specimens of Dialects of the Boḍo Group

English	Gāro	Mech	Lālung	Koch	Plain and Hill Kachāri
One	Sā	Shāse, Māse	Kichā	Gasak, Goisā	Se, Sui Māshī
Eye	Mikron	Mogan	Mu	Mukrung	Megan, Mū
I	Āṅgā	Āṅg	Āṅg	Āṅgā, Ān	Āṅg, Aṅg
Man	Mānde	Mānshiā	Libing	Māndai, Marok	Munshui, Shūbāṅg
Sun	Sāl	Sān	Sāla	Sāl	Sān, Shain

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APPENDIX II

Genealogy

From : *Chronicles*	From : *Inscriptions*		Period of reign (approximate)
	1. BHAUMA—VARMAN FAMILY		
1. BHAUMAS (Naraka-Bhagadatta, etc. with about twenty-five rulers)	(About twelve rulers ruled before the founder of the Varman line)	..	A.D. 100-355
	Puṣyavarman	..	355-380
	Samudravarman = (Queen—Dattavatī)	..	380-405
	Balavarman (I) = (Ratnavatī)	..	405-420
	Kalyāṇavarman = (Gandharvavatī)	..	420-440
	Gaṇapativarman = (Yajñavatī)	..	440-450
	Mahendravarman = (Suvratā)	..	450-485
	Nārāyaṇavarman = (Devavatī)	..	485-510
	Bhūtivarman = (Vijñānavatī)	..	510-555
	Chandramukhavarman = (Bhogavatī)	..	555-565
	Sthitavarman = (Nayanadevī)	..	565-585
	Susthitavarman = (Śyāmādevī)	..	585-593
	(a) Supratiṣṭhitavarman		(a)— 593-594
	(b) Bhāskaravarman	..	(b)— 594-650

2. THE LINE OF ŚĀLASTAMBHA

(probably a collateral branch of the Varmans.)

2. Family of MĀDHAVA (with about twenty-one rulers)	Śālastambha	..	650-675
	Vijaya or Vigrahastambha		675-725
	Pālaka		
	Kumāra		
	Vajradeva		
	Śrī Harṣa or Harṣadeva	..	725-750
	Balavarman (II)	..	750-765
	xx(About two unknown successors)	..	765-790

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From : *Chronicles*	From : *Inscriptions*	Period of reign (approximate)
	Cakra—Arathi	... did not reign
	(a) Sālambha (Prālambha) (b) Ārathī=(Jīvadevī) (Āratha)	.. (a)— 790-810 .. (b)— 810-815
	Harjjaravarman=(Śrī Maṅgalā)	.. 815-835
	Vanamālavarmādeva	.. 835-865
	Jayamāla or Vīrabāhu=(Ambā)	.. 865-885
	Balavarman (III)	.. 885-910
	x x x (About three unknown successors)	.. 910-970
	Tyāgasiṁha (21st ruler)	.. 970-990

3. THE PĀLA LINE

(probably a branch of the former ruling dynasty)

3. Family of JITĀRI (with about eight rulers)	Brahmapāla=(Kuladevī)	.. 990-1010
	Ratnapāla	.. 1010-1040
	Purandarapāla=(Durlabhā)	.. did not reign as king.
	Indrapāla=(Rājyadevī)	.. 1040-1065
	Gopāla=(Nayanā)	.. 1065-1085
	Harṣapāla=(Ratnā)	1085-1095
	Dharmapāla	.. 1095-1120
	Jayapāla (known from Śilimpur record)	.. 1120-1138

4. VAIDYADEVA .. 1138-1145

4. Family of ĀRIMATTA (with about four rulers)	Rāyārideva or Trailokyasiṁha (probably related to Vaidyadeva) Udayakarṇa	.. 1145-1175
	Vallabhadeva	.. 1175-1195
	Pṛthu or Viśvasundaradeva (probably related to Vallabhadeva)	.. 1195-1228

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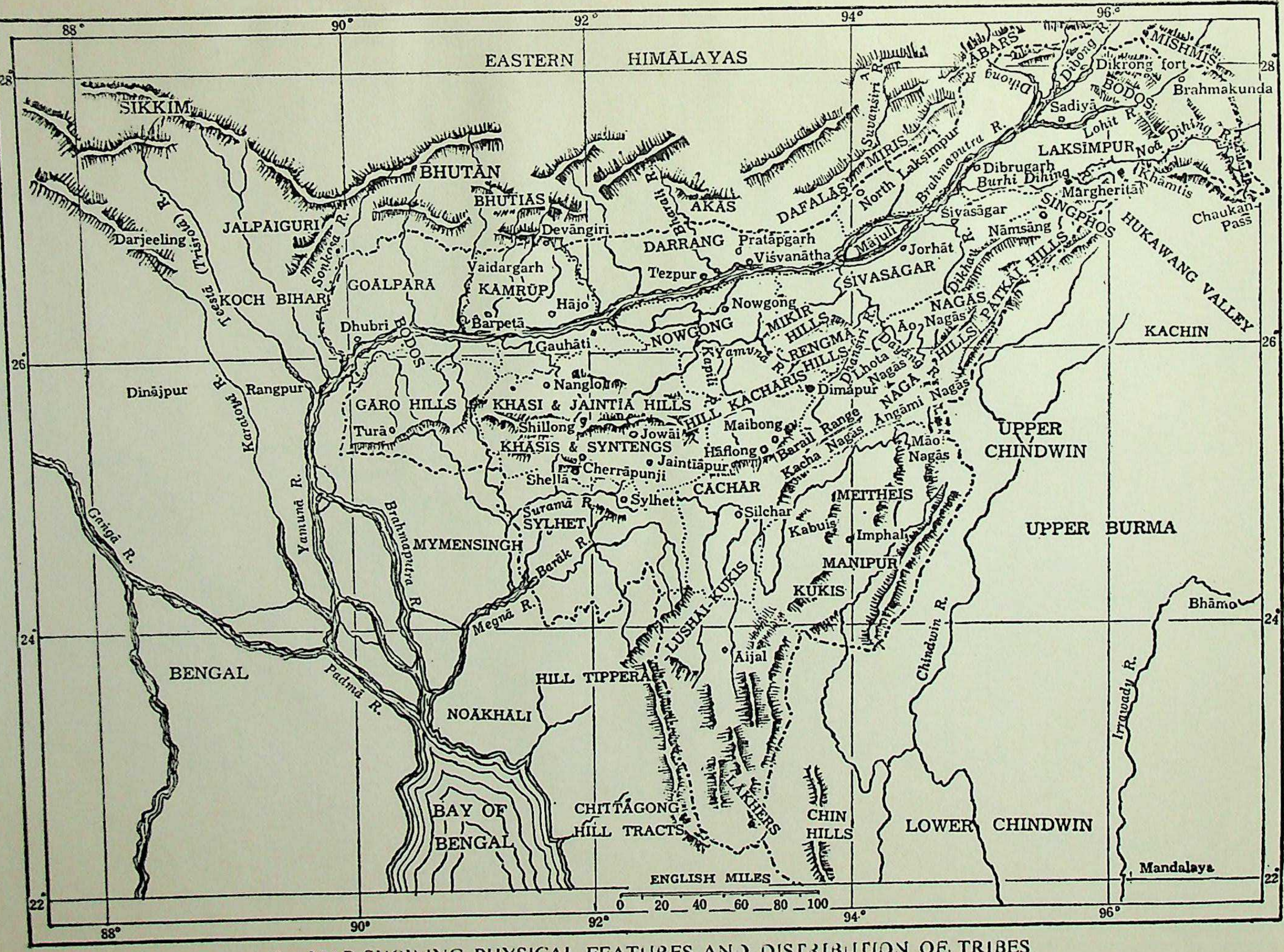

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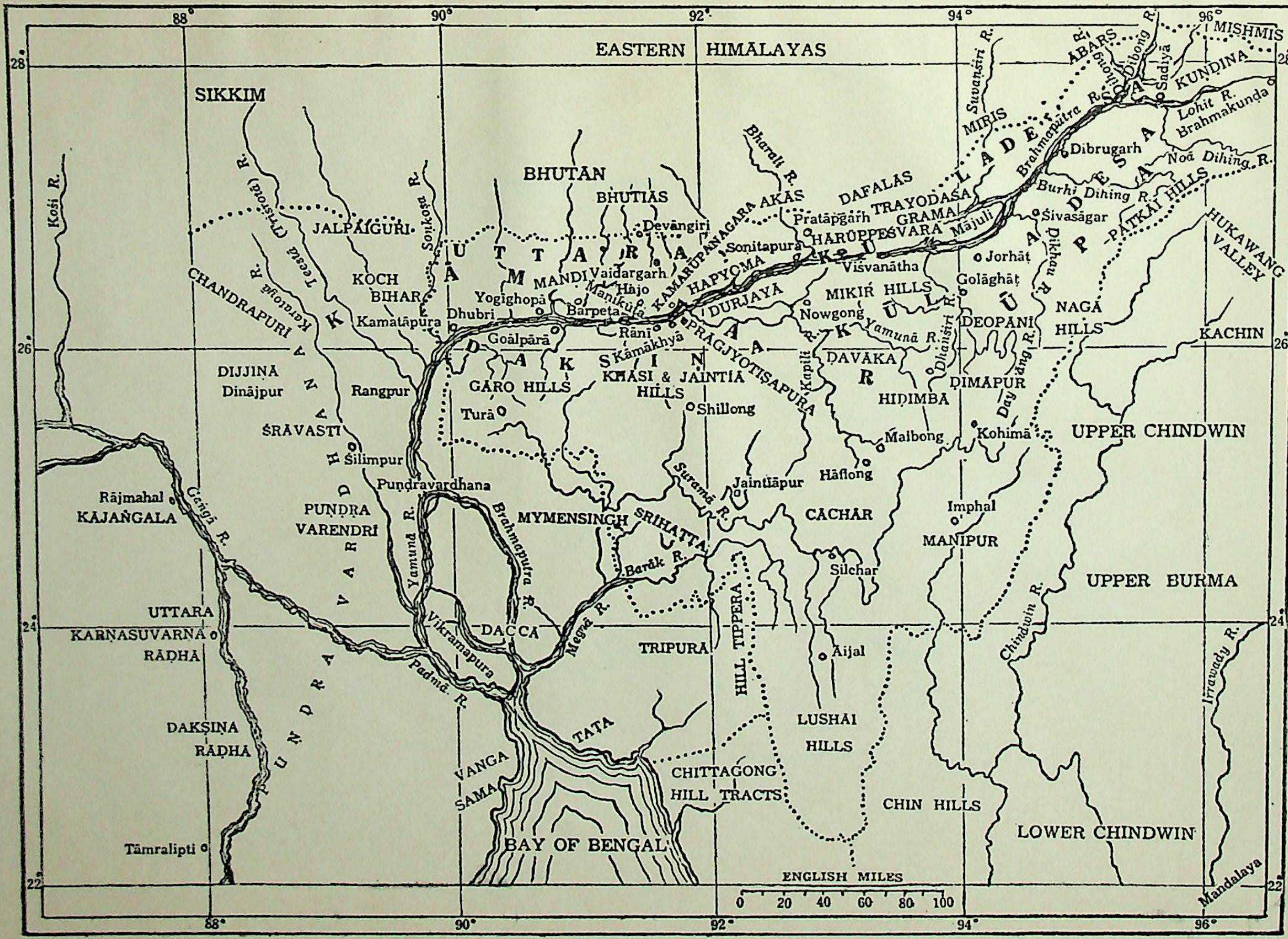

2. POLITICAL MAP OF PRĀGJYOTIṢA—KĀMARŪPA (A.D. 400-1200)

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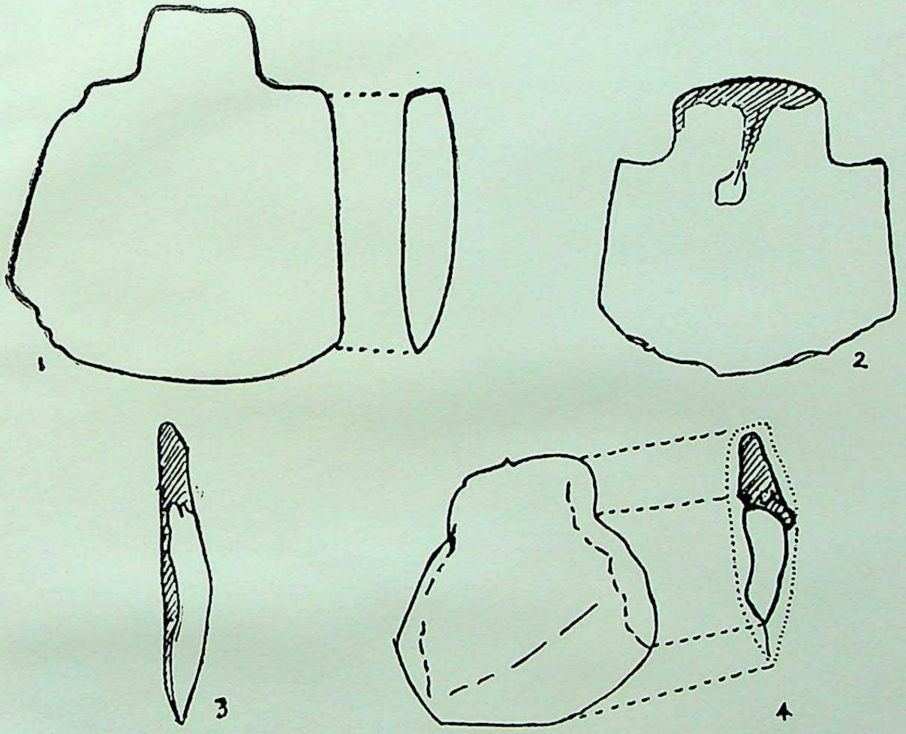

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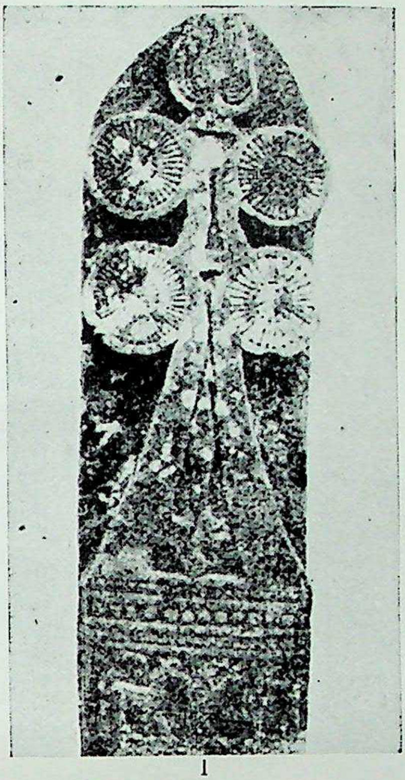

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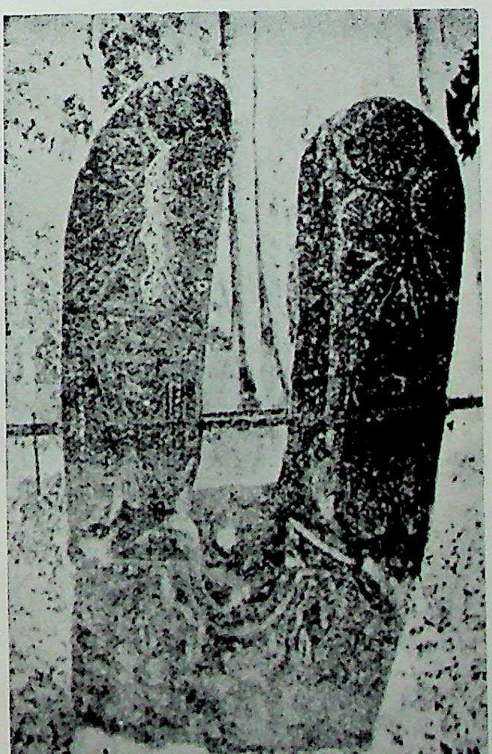

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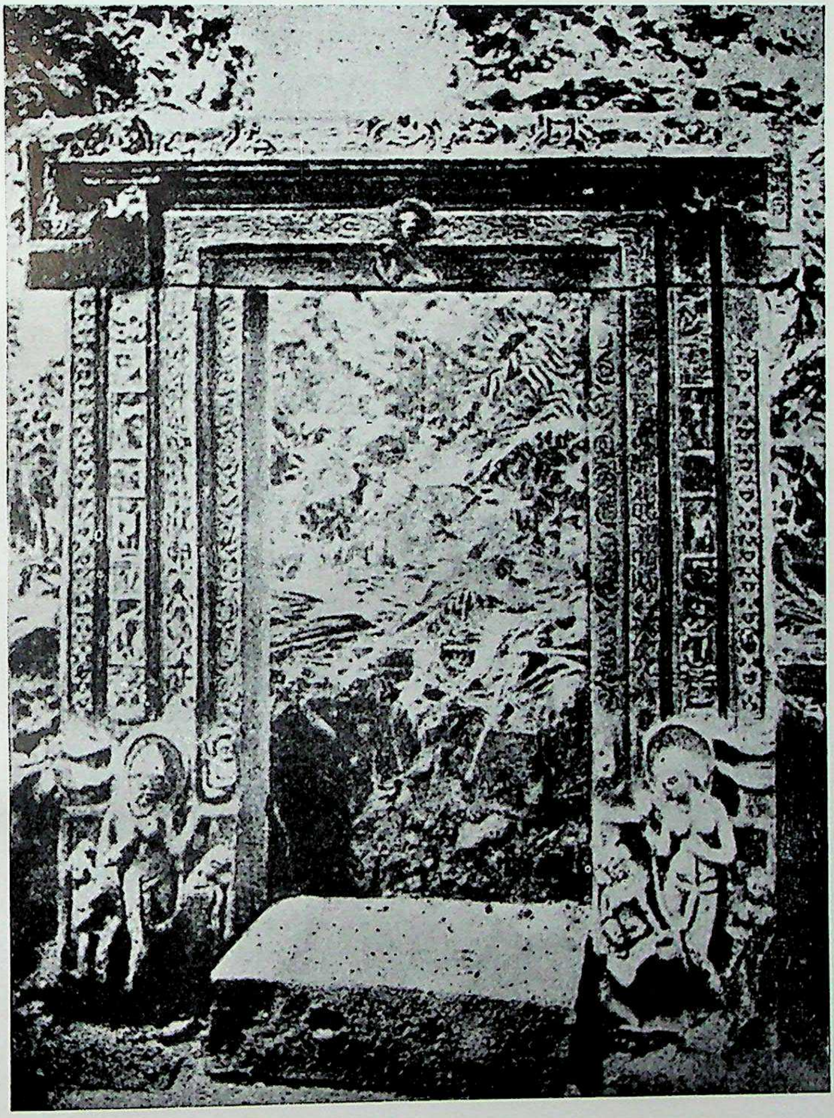

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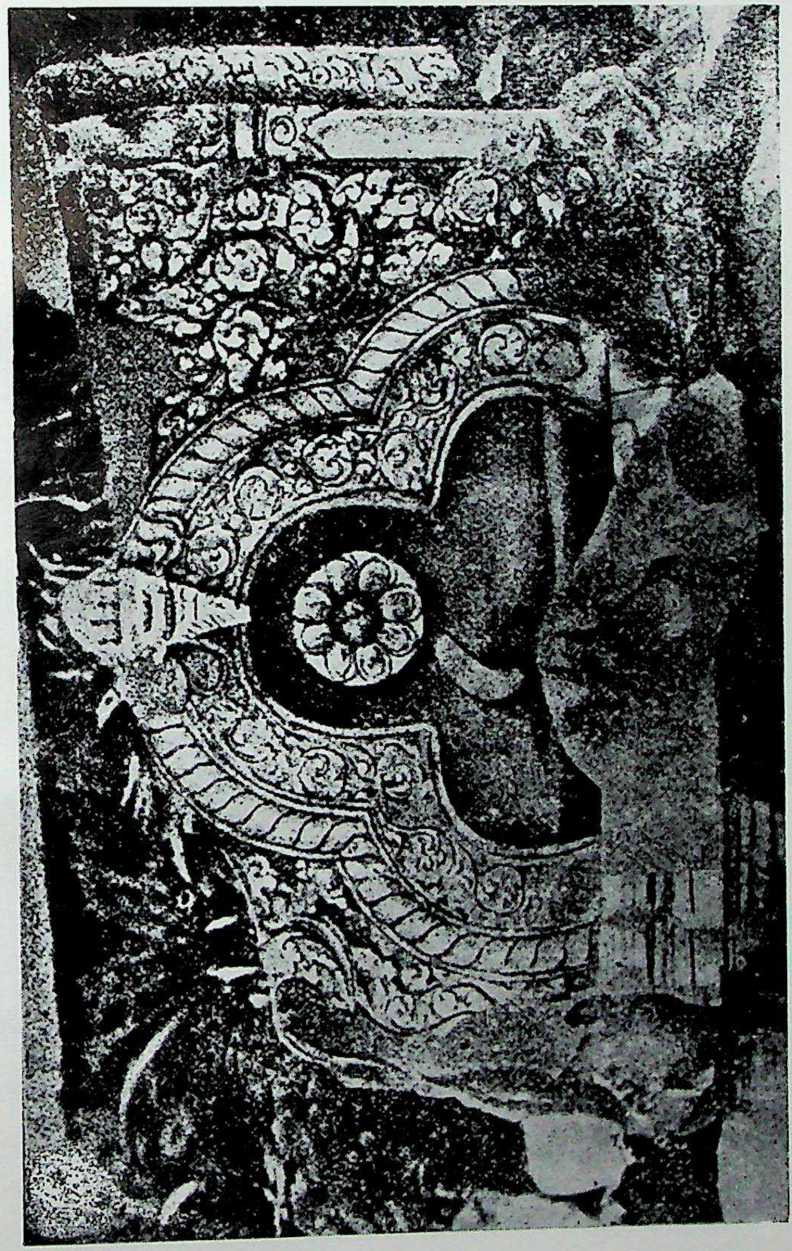

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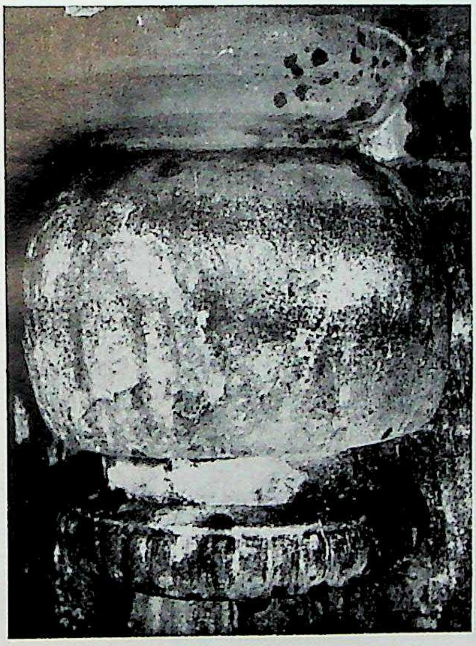

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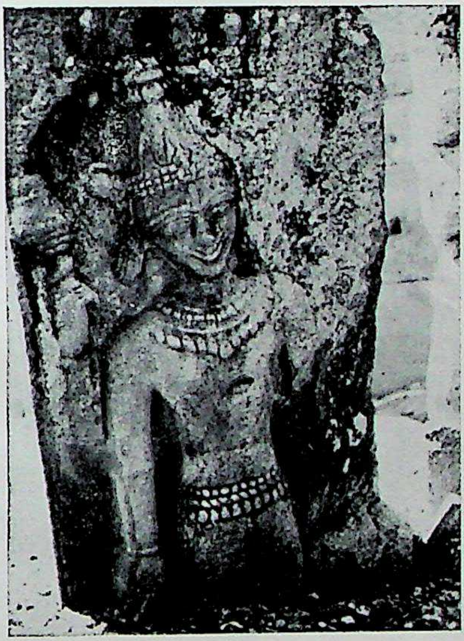

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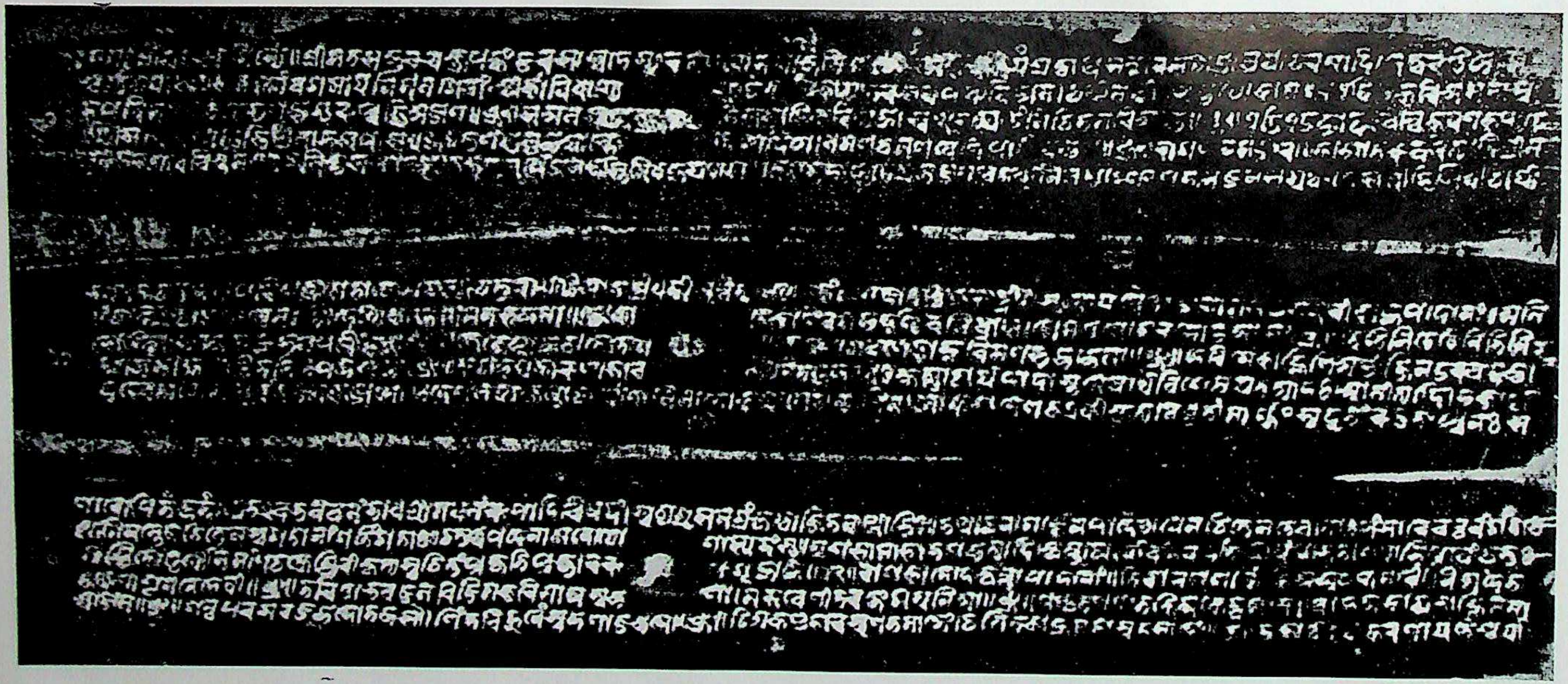

f. 1.

f. 14—B

f. 23—B

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